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# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**HOW WILL EXTERNAL POWERS AFFECT KOREAN  
REUNIFICATION?**

by

Suzanne M. Tovar  
September 2005

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Edward A. Olsen  
Lyman H. Miller

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**HOW WILL EXTERNAL POWERS AFFECT KOREAN REUNIFICATION?**

Suzanne M. Tovar  
Lieutenant, United States Navy  
B.S., United States Naval Academy, 1999

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

from the

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Korean peninsula has been a focus of contention since the nineteenth century. Following the division of the peninsula after World War II, the issue of when, and how, Korea will be reunified has been a subject of intense interest, one that has been encouraged of late by the end of the Cold War, the extreme economic weakness of North Korea, and the decision by the North to pursue a nuclear option. Although war failed to unify the peninsula in 1950-1953, the fear is that a desperate communist regime may once again attempt to unify the peninsula by force. A second scenario for unification envisions the implosion of an economically debilitated regime in the North. Finally, a peaceful reunification through diplomacy constitutes a third scenario.

The dilemma is that, although reunification is intensely desired by the Korean people, the United States, the PRC, Japan, and Russia prefer a continuation of the status quo. The attitude of Korea's neighbors and strategic partners is important especially because reunification under whatever scenario will undoubtedly require support, both diplomatic and economic of the surrounding powers. This thesis examines the various scenarios for Korean reunification and their implications for the international relations in Northeastern Asia. It concludes that the collapse of the political system in the North Korean state will initiate reunification. As a result of this, China will play the greatest role upon reunification and therefore have a superior influence over the peninsula.



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# **I. KOREAN REUNIFICATION**

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Koreans date the birth of their nation to 2333 BC when the first great ruler of Korea, Tan'gun Wang'gom, united the six tribes in the northern part of the peninsula. Legend holds that Tan'gun is the descendent of Hwan-in, king of the eastern heavens, and Ung-yo which means "the girl incarnated from a bear." Tan'gun would call his kingdom Chosun which means "Land of the Morning Calm," "Land of the Dawn," or "Land of the Morning Freshness".<sup>1</sup> He established his capital at Asadal, today Pyongyang, where he taught his people lessons of government, marriage, agriculture, and religion. The Tan'gun legend has provided spiritual comfort to modern day Koreans during times of crisis. While a story of a god-like creature who desires to become a man is considered mere legend to many Westerners, this mythological story bolsters the Korean belief that their nation is an ancient one.<sup>2</sup> By the first century B.C., three kingdoms emerged on the Korean Peninsula and part of what is now known as Manchuria: Koguryo (37 B.C. - A.D. 688), Paekche (18 B.C. - A.D. 660) and Shilla (57 B.C. - A.D. 935).<sup>3</sup> Together they form the beginning of the Korean nation.

It is the long history of the Korean people and their ancient beginnings which acts as a bond, whether they are separated by an international boundary or not. The Korean peninsula has been divided for more than fifty years against the wishes of its people. Countries which had also been partitioned after World War II have all reunified save two, the PRC and Taiwan and North and South Korea. Two entirely different systems in North and South Korea have not been able to come to a conclusion as to which method of reunification should be used. On 4 July 1972, the North-South Joint Communiqué stated that reunification

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1997), 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>3</sup> John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer, and Albert M. Craig, ed. *East Asia Tradition and Transformation*, (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), 1027.

should be attained independently without external imposition, it should be attained by peaceful means, and finally, it should be attained on a basis that transcends differences in ideas, ideologies, and systems.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the joint communiqué stating that Koreans will be independent, historically Korea has been a pawn of powerful neighbors. Korea is described as a “shrimp among whales”. The “whales” in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century history were China, Russia, and Japan. These were joined by the United States in 1945. It is self evident that each of these powers holds a different and at times conflicting view toward Korean reunification. The United States, for instance, has been disposed to be positive towards Korean reunification although there is no policy in place to speed it up. The United States fears that reunification would end its special security tie with South Korea. An end to this relationship might mean the end of forward stationed military bases and the end of American influence in a key part of Asia. China, on the other hand, regards reunification with apprehension for entirely different reasons. China views North Korea as a “useful buffer zone that contributes to their national security.” It also enjoys a thriving economic relationship with South Korea. Chinese political scientist Chae-jin Lee answers that Beijing has “no compelling reason to push for Korea’s immediate political reintegration, even by peaceful means.”<sup>5</sup> Japan also has shown some apprehension about reunification of the peninsula as it would pose greater economic and diplomatic challenges to them. Lastly, while Russia does not oppose the benefits which would befall their nation upon reunification, they do not want to see the rise of a new regional power on its border at a time of domestic turmoil.<sup>6</sup> At the very least, these four powers have contradictory attitudes toward reunification. The major assumption among all of them is that the South will gradually integrate the North. However, reunification may happen

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<sup>4</sup> Byong Hong Kim, “Korean Reunification,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 38, no. 2, *The China Challenge: American Policies in East Asia* (1991): 115.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Nicholas Eberstadt, “Hastening Korean Reunification,” *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 1997): 78.

<sup>6</sup> Nicholas Eberstadt, “Hastening Korean Reunification,” *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 1997): 78.

more rapidly and as a result of a war or a Northern collapse. It is impossible for the four powers to postpone discussions about reunification until after it occurs. Both North and South Korea understand that reunification will seriously challenge the status quo in Northeast Asia. According to the Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU)

The second-term Bush Administration will continue to push forward a foreign policy in the Northeast Asian region based on the general outline of anti-terrorism, preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and spreading American values... China will counter US unilateralism and Japanese ambitions to become a military power through multilateralism and security cooperation with Russia. It will also try to enhance its status in Northeast Asia by taking a role as mediator in the North Korean nuclear issue... Russia will use its strategic alliance with China to curb US unilateralism and strategy of pre-emptive strikes. Russia will also utilize energy development in Siberia and the Far Eastern region to regain influence within Northeast Asia.<sup>7</sup>

Koreans are aware of the impact their reunification will have on Asian security. There is already a delicate balancing act among the four powers to exert influence over the Koreas. In preparation for reunification of the peninsula, China, Russia, Japan, and the United States should realize that their actions will go a long way in deciding what kind of influence they will have over Korea and the Northeast Asian region. The scenario under which Korea unites will undoubtedly determine which country will have the majority of influence over the peninsula. The nations' policies that are implemented before unification will make the greatest impact on how the unified Korea will react to them.

## **B. POSSIBLE REUNIFICATION SCENARIOS**

### **1. Reunification as a Result of War**

North Korea continues to threaten South Korea, Japan and the rest of the Asian region with the threat of their nuclear arsenal. At the end of April 2005 the North test fired a short range missile into the Sea of Japan setting off alarms for the Six-Party nations. North Korea's unchecked nuclear capabilities threaten the U.Ss-Japan alliance and serve as a reminder that reunification might come about

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<sup>7</sup> "Outlook for the International Affairs and Inter-Korean Relations in 2005", [available online] <http://www.kinu.or.kr>; last updated July 30, 2005.



on the Korean peninsula as a result of war or conflict. In one case the North Koreans could decide to show their aggression and finally reunite the peninsula under their terms. Missile delivered chemical attacks on ROK ports and U.S. logistics nodes would delay the reinforcements that would be coming from the West Coast of the United States and Japan. This strategy would give them time to conquer Seoul and replenish their supply lines while also firing Nodong or Taepodong missile attacks at Japan.<sup>8</sup>

In another scenario, many small destabilization campaigns could be carried out in the South without actually resorting to a full-scale war. These campaigns could be in the form of psychological operations tailored for South Korea or Japan, support for radical student movements through financial support, changing of public attitudes on unification and security, and disinformation campaigns through the media.<sup>9</sup> In a third case the United States and its allies could preempt any action that Kim Jong-il might take and end the DPRK's nuclear program as well as his tyrannical regime before nuclear weapons are used against the United States or Japan. Unification by this outcome would most likely yield heavy casualties and exorbitant costs. The DPRK has proven that their missiles can reach as far as the Japanese mainland. If any action led to a war with the North Korean regime, Japan along with South Korea would suffer dire consequences to infrastructure and economy.

## **2. Reunification as a Result of the DPRK's Collapse**

The collapse of the North Korean regime should be looked at as the "inability of the regime in power to maintain effective political, economic, social, and political control, which ultimately leads to its dissolution and, in the extreme case, the formal end of the state".<sup>10</sup> During the 1990s, it was widely believed that the North Korean economy through famine and economic mismanagement

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<sup>8</sup> "A Blueprint for U.S. Policy Toward a Unified Korea," in CSIS International Security Program [database online]. Washington, D.C. August 2002 [cited 2005], [available online]

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan D. Pollack and Chung Min Lee, *Preparing for Korean Unification Scenarios and Implications*, (Washington, D.C.: RAND, 1999), 69.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan D. Pollack and Chung Min Lee, *Preparing for Korean Unification Scenarios and Implications*, (Washington, D.C.: RAND, 1999), 59.

would collapse and send the regime toppling. Years have passed and while the North Korean people are still starving and suffering from lack of medical treatment, the regime is still present. It is more likely that if a regime collapse were to occur, it would happen as a result of power struggles by factions within the DPRK.<sup>11</sup> Many experts assume that the North Korean system has persevered for so long because of the people's belief in *juch'e*. The former Great Leader of North Korea, Kim Il-Sung, officially proclaimed the *juch'e* ideology on December 1955. According to Kim, *juch'e* means "the independent stance of rejecting dependence on others and of using one's own powers, believing in one's own strength and displaying revolutionary spirit of self-reliance". *Juch'e* was designed to highlight a "Korea centered" revolution, inspire pride and identity, and mold a focus of solidarity on Kim and the governmental party.<sup>12</sup> Under the new and improved *Juch'e* idea, the population of North Korea must give all love and power to the Kim family. "Closely aligned to *Juch'e* is a nearly holy writ that the Kim family must one day rule the Korean peoples on both sides of the demilitarized zone".<sup>13</sup> The death of Kim Jong-il and the consequential assumption of leadership of a non kinsman "Kim" in the North might trigger a collapse of the system

There are three different variations of a collapse that could be considered: "a collapse that results in the dissolution of the ruling regime, with a successor regime managing to retain political and military control; a collapse where political instability is rampant and where the successor regime is unable to establish or retain effective governing authority led either by the party, the bureaucracy, or the military; and a collapse that could precipitate some type of conflict – internally in the form of limited military clashes with existing governing authorities or externally in terms of border clashes with the South or more extensive military

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<sup>11</sup> "Northeast Asian Security After Korean Reconciliation Or Reunification - Preparing the U.S.-Japan Alliance," Summary Report, p. 8,

<sup>12</sup> *North Korea, Political ideology: The role of the Chuch'e* (June 1993) [database online]; available from Library of Congress Country Studies.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Marquand, "Sustaining N. Korea's Cult of Kim," Boston (Mass.) Christian Science Monitor, 16 January 2003, 01.

operations directed against the ROK".<sup>14</sup> It is difficult to predict which variation might actually occur, but there are several characteristics which are common to all of the variations. First, a triggering event could initiate the collapse with little, if any, advance warning. The event could fall between the two extremes of mass disorder that force a change or a "crumbling" down from above. This event would probably be the result of a coup. Second, some form of international intervention into the North would be necessary to restore order. Intervention could be in the form of a U.S.-ROK joint action or under UN leadership. Third, high priority measures would need to be taken to control masses of population for labor migration and refugee processing through the borders.<sup>15</sup> A collapse of North Korea has been compared to what happened between East and West Germany. Although the two Germanys offer a historical analogy there are a great number of differences between the Germanys and the Korean peninsula. For instance, the two Germanys were able to have a semi-normal diplomatic relationship for two decades before unification. The Koreas have yet to initiate their diplomatic relationship. Also, East Germany was never in the vast state of economic upheaval from which North Korea suffers. West Germany was in a much better economic position than South Korea and yet, after unification they still had to be supported for many years by external aid and foreign investment. As noted in a RAND corporation study, "the process will prove far more tumultuous within the region than German reunification has proved in Europe. Moreover, the emergence of a unified, economically strong Korea could bring on a new era of competition to replace the tensions of the Cold War, centered on the possible advent of intense economic and diplomatic rivalry with Japan and the revival of historical suspicions of China and Russia."<sup>16</sup> International intervention will be necessary to restore order to the North. Should the Japan-United States

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<sup>14</sup> Pollack and Lee, "Preparing for Korean Unification Scenarios and Implications," 59.

<sup>15</sup> "A Blueprint for U.S. Policy Toward a Unified Korea," in CSIS International Security Program [database online]. Washington, D.C. August 2002 [cited 2005], [available online]

<sup>16</sup> Chae-Jin Lee, "U.S. and Japanese Policies Toward Korean Reunification," in *U.S.-Japan Partnership in Conflict Management - the Case of Korea* The Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies, 1993), 143.

alliance provide the multinational force that will be needed after North Korea falls, the two nations will have more influence along the peninsula in deciding the political and economic aspects of reunified Korea.

### **3. Reunification as a Result of Inter-Korean or Multilateral Diplomacy**

Seemingly the most preferred option for reunification on the Korean peninsula is peaceful and gradual integration between the two Koreas. A rapid reconciliation could be worrisome and chaotic to the North Korean regime. Without sufficient time to address key issues such as the DPRK's missile and WMD capabilities as well as gaining consensus within the North's political elite, the whole process could fail resulting in the "hard landing" or collapse scenario.<sup>17</sup> However, if the proper time was taken to reconcile most differences through a "gradual reconciliation", the outcome would be more desirable. Prior to reunification, there must be the presence of seven traits: initial acceptance of the status quo by the two Koreas and the four major powers; mutual diplomatic recognition along the two-plus-two model; a formal peace treaty; a protracted period of peaceful coexistence; greater interaction between the two Koreas (mostly economic); slow structural change evolving into a "one country, two systems, and a two governments" approach; and eventual unification.<sup>18</sup> Unification under these peaceful terms requires that there no longer be a military or nuclear threat against one another and there must be integration on the military and economic side. Under the new auspices, a unified Korea would have to renegotiate all previous accords with the two Koreas and the international community.<sup>19</sup> This would be a lengthy process which might change previous relationships with China, the United States, and Russia. Moreover in a peaceful and integrated reunification, the Korean people and their new government will have more power to set up and to choose their alliances.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>18</sup> "A Blueprint for U.S. Policy Toward a Unified Korea," in CSIS International Security Program [database online]. Washington, D.C. August 2002 [cited 2005], [available online]

<sup>19</sup> Pollack and Lee, "Preparing for Korean Unification Scenarios and Implications," 59.

The two Koreas are currently on the path of inter-Korean and multilateral diplomacy for purposes of reunification of the peninsula. The one major factor which has slowed progress for the past decade has been North Korea's inability to terminate its nuclear program. On February 14, 2003, a broadcast from the Korean Central News Agency, a state-owned and run television news service, stated that the North Koreans had withdrawn from the Agreed Framework and reactivated their nuclear facilities in direct response to the threat that they felt from U.S. actions.<sup>20</sup> Since North Korea has made this proclamation, the Four Powers (United States, China, Japan, and Russia) along with South Korea and North Korea began collective discussions to end the nuclear program in August 2003. Since the opening rounds, the Six-Party Talks held in Beijing have only met four times and were adjourned as of early August 2005 without an agreement. Discussions started once again on September 14, 2005 after a five week hiatus in which North Korea and the United States continued the talks during back-channel discussions.<sup>21</sup> As of the conclusion of this paper, an agreement was reached for North Korea to stop building nuclear weapons and allow entrance to international inspections in exchange for energy aid, economic cooperation and security assurances.<sup>22</sup> Even though this new policy has been agreed upon, the Six Party Talks will resume in November 2005 to discuss implementation. Until international inspectors have seen the North Korean nuclear plants, Pyongyang will still be able to continue their nuclear weapons program. Until North Korea terminates its nuclear program, inter-Korean and multilateral discussions cannot continue to reunify the peninsula.

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Kerr, "North Korea Restarts Reactor; IAEA sends resolution to UN," *Arms Control Today* 33, no. 2 (Mar 2003).

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Kahn, "North Korea Talks Resume, Still in a Standoff," *New York Times*, Sep 14, 2005, p. A6.

<sup>22</sup> "North Korea pledges to halt nuke programs," *MSNBC News Service*, Sep 19, 2005, [available online] <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9375104/>

## **II. CAN JAPAN OVERCOME HISTORY TO REGAIN INFLUENCE OVER THE KOREAN PENINSULA**

### **A. JAPANESE AND KOREAN RELATIONS DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD**

The Korean people experienced years of hardship and suffering at the hands of their Japanese occupiers during the years 1910-1945. The complete surrender of the Japanese during World War II finally liberated the Korean people from Japan's militaristic control. Korean history shows that Japan was not the only nation to seek the benefits offered by the Korean peninsula's location. From 1895 till 1905 (only 10 years) Korea would be caught between China, Russia, and Japan as they each tried to gain leverage over the peninsula and consequently gain trade and resource advantages. The Yi monarch, the ruling Korean government at the time, believed the foreigners that were competing for influence on the peninsula could be controlled. By using the foreigners against one another Korea's independence could be preserved.<sup>23</sup> Korea, a "younger brother" in the "tributary relationship", also depended on their past alliance with China to provide them with security. Since China's own borders were vulnerable to British and Russian powers as well as the rapidly industrializing Japan they could not save the Korean peninsula.<sup>24</sup> China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 proved to Korea that they were unable to protect them from the Japanese. Japan went even further to establish their control over the Korean peninsula when they defeated the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. Korea sought the aid of the Western powers but received no help from the United States or Britain. The United States did not want to interfere with Japan's power over the Korean peninsula. This policy was spelled out in the Taft-Katsura Agreement of 1905 which stated a mutual recognition of Japan's new territory on

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<sup>23</sup> Chae-Jin Lee, "U.S. and Japanese Policies Toward Korean Reunification," in *U.S.-Japan Partnership in Conflict Management - the Case of Korea* The Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies, 1993), 4.

<sup>24</sup> "The Japanese Occupation of Korea: 1910-1945," in The Korea Society [database online]. New York, NY [cited 2005], Available from [http://www.koreasociety.org/KS\\_curriculum/HS/2/2-text/2\\_062.htm](http://www.koreasociety.org/KS_curriculum/HS/2/2-text/2_062.htm)

the peninsula.<sup>25</sup> Korea would fall hopelessly to Japan while foreign powers watched.

Japan ruled over Korea during the occupation in the same manner with which they gained control over the peninsula. They expanded their influence in Korea by assassinating some members of the Korean ruling family.<sup>26</sup> As these ruling authorities died off, Japanese military officials stepped in to assume the government power. In 1910 Tokyo declared the formal annexation of Korea and renamed it "Chosen", a Japanese pronunciation of the Korean "Chosun". The thirty-five year occupation of the Korean peninsula went through several phases. At the beginning, the occupation has been recorded as somewhat benign. It was believed that early in the occupation the Korean nationalists might actually take control of the peninsula. Consequently, Japan dominated the Korean people with only a single division with a few added regiments. Upon the rumored assassination of the last Korean king, the nationalist movement spread and gained more support.<sup>27</sup> The result of the movement was the March 1919 uprising which was suppressed by the Japanese military. The Koreans that were sympathetic to and participants in the independence movement were arrested and imprisoned. The benign treatment from the Japanese turned harsh and cruel. Many Koreans died as a result of beatings, torture, or horrible prison conditions.<sup>28</sup> Following this uprising, the Japanese increased their military presence with two divisions to maintain a tight control over the peninsula. The Japanese forces occupying the Korean nation would number a quarter of a million by 1937.<sup>29</sup> Without the help of foreign nations, Koreans would not be able to gain their own independence.

The Japanese believed that they were modernizing Korea and providing them with opportunities they otherwise would not have had. The rest of the world

<sup>25</sup> Lee, "U.S. and Japanese Policies Toward Korean Reunification," 5.

<sup>26</sup> "The Japanese Occupation of Korea: 1910-1945."

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Lee, "U.S. and Japanese Policies Toward Korean Reunification," 7.

now sees the occupation in Korea as well as China as less benevolent than the Japanese had originally claimed. Tokyo's *naisen ittai* policy, Japan and Korea as single body, would force Koreans to worship at Shinto shrines, to be educated in the Japanese language in Korean schools, and take on compulsory Japanese names while discarding their Korean ones.<sup>30</sup> Once the Korean peninsula was part of the Japanese empire, Japan believed that Koreans should live with all things Japanese. Early on in the occupation Japan had claimed religious tolerance. However, thousands of Presbyterian Church leaders were arrested, 47 leaders were shot or beaten to death, and 12 churches were destroyed following the 1919 Independence movement.<sup>31</sup> Shinto beliefs such as worship of the Japanese Emperor and his ancestors were forced on the Korean people. The Japanese feared that worship in other religions would stir up another revolt against the occupiers. Education served as another problem since Korean students were discriminated against in favor of Japanese students. Korean children were taught skilled job training rather than the higher education that was stressed to the Japanese. By the 1930s all students were taught in Japanese. Japan maintained most of the nation's natural resources for their use. In 1945, Japan held 85% of all the property in Korea and 83% of that property was owned by the Japanese government or zaibatsus.<sup>32</sup> It was in 1940 that Koreans were told to give up their family name and take on Japanese names. To coerce the Koreans to do this they were told that the Korean children could not go to school and the adults could not get jobs until their names were changed. Another major insult Japan paid to Korea was to take both their men and women in support of the war in the Pacific against the Allied Powers. The Korean men were coerced to comply with the draft by threatening their families. Through conscription, there would be 50,000 Korean men in the Japanese army by the year 1945.<sup>33</sup> The women were also given "jobs" and taken to the front lines of the war. Korean

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<sup>30</sup> Lee, "U.S. and Japanese Policies Toward Korean Reunification," 7.

<sup>31</sup> "The Japanese Occupation of Korea: 1910-1945."

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Lee, "U.S. and Japanese Policies Toward Korean Reunification," 12.



women were offered jobs and then taken to the Japanese army where they were to act as prostitutes. These women who were used against their will were referred to as “comfort women”. Some of these women were beaten while others were so ashamed that they could never come back to their families and homes. This issue is still fresh in the minds of the Koreans as reparations are being requested for these women who suffered so greatly.

Japan’s history with the Korean peninsula during the colonial period shows how cruelly and despicably they treated the Korean people. The Korean people and their culture were believed to be inferior to that of the Japanese way. This reign of harsh treatment would finally end with the unconditional surrender of the Japanese to the Allied Powers. Only recently have the leaders of Japan admitted their wrongdoings during the occupation and apologized to South Korea for their actions. A reunified Korea will always be wary of Japan gaining more military power and once again dominating the Asian region. While Korea has begun to forgive Japan’s actions, they will never forget what has happened to them. Based on their history, Japan must make great amends politically and economically to gain more influence with a reunified Korea.

## **B. HISTORY AFTER KOREA’S DIVISION**

Following Japan’s unconditional surrender to the Allies, colonization ended and a long difficult road between Japan and the two Koreas began. The Syngman Rhee administration in South Korea from 1948 to 1960 was very pro-United States but anti-Japan. Because of this, normalization talks which had begun in 1952 with Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) were very lengthy. It was not until President Park Chung-hee took over and emphasized Korean industrialization and economic growth that economic and diplomatic relations with Japan were reestablished. Normalization talks were finalized in 1965 when Japan established diplomatic relations with the ROK.<sup>34</sup> Following the normalization, Japan has helped South Korea become more economically and

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<sup>34</sup> "Policy Recommendations for Japan: Unification of the Korean Peninsula," in The Brookings Institution Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies [database online]. Washington, DC July 2004 [cited 2005]. Available from <http://www.brookings.edu>

militarily powerful than North Korea through economic assistance.<sup>35</sup> North Korea and Japan began their normalization talks in January 1991, however there was little progress that was made since North Korea's nuclear program and abduction of Japanese citizens halted the talks.<sup>36</sup> Japan still has not normalized diplomatic relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) despite their "policy of virtual equidistance between South and North Korea for the purpose of maintaining the status quo on the Korean peninsula."<sup>37</sup>

The relation of Japan and the two Koreas has for obvious reasons remained frictional as a result of Japan's infiltration and 35 year occupation of the Korean peninsula. Japan is responsible for millions of Chinese slaughtered, millions of Koreans being enslaved, and tens of thousands of women being forced to provide sexual services to the Japanese troops. Although Japanese leaders have apologized for their actions their sincerity is questionable for many reasons: Japanese textbooks in Tokyo gloss over Japanese actions and atrocities, the dominating party in Japan's government has, as a group, supported nationalists and former war criminals, and the official version of the war guilt (which has been endorsed by the United States) is blamed on a small militarist clique who hijacked the Japanese government during the War.<sup>38</sup> Both North and South Korea share with China in asking Japan to truthfully record their historic mistreatment in textbooks. Koreans fear that if Japan does not actively confess and apologize for their past wrongs, they may, in the future, repeat their savagery. More practically, however, is that Japan must continue to accept responsibility for their conduct in the war before they can take their position in Asian discussions of security including Korean reunification. They will need to make a future apology to the North Koreans as well, once diplomatic relations are established.

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<sup>35</sup> Yoshinori Kaseda, "Japan and the Korean Peace Process," in *The Korean Peace Process and the Four Powers* (England: Ashgate, 2003), 119.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>37</sup> Lee, "U.S. and Japanese Policies Toward Korean Reunification," 130.

<sup>38</sup> "Japan Apologizes," *New York Times*, Aug 16 1995, p. A.24.

Relations between Japan and the Korean peninsula have more recently centered on the return of the abducted Japanese citizens' remains. North Korea has admitted to abducting thirteen Japanese people in the 1970s and 1980s in order to help train their spies.<sup>39</sup> North Korea claims that five of them were repatriated and the other eight were dead. Japan recently received the supposed remains of two of the abductees; however, when DNA testing was done it showed that it was not the remains of the kidnapped Japanese citizens. This has outraged the Japanese and led to a call for possible sanctions in the Japanese government. In February 2004, the government passed legislation that would allow Japan to impose sanctions without the approval of a UN Security Council resolution.<sup>40</sup> Japanese sentiment is now shifting toward sanctions as well since 63 percent of citizens and 83 percent of the Diet members are in favor of imposing economic sanctions.<sup>41</sup> Sanctioning has been supported by the United States, yet disliked by the South Koreans. In response to this issue, Japan temporarily froze their food aid to the DPRK. They are cautious to resume any sanctions because, if their effectiveness is doubtful, it could cause Japan to lose opportunities for further negotiations. Japan wants the abduction issue settled and will bring up the issue once again upon resuming the Six-Party Talks. Both South Korea and North Korea have been outwardly against Japan bringing up such a topic in this forum. According to the KCNA, "Japan has busied itself to divert the orientation and atmosphere for the six-party talks into those serving its mean interests."<sup>42</sup> Japan must be careful not to make relations with South Korea more complex by trying to resolve their current issues with North Korean abductions.

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<sup>39</sup> "Japan Wants to Raise Abductions at North Korea Talks," *The Star Online*, July 11, 2005 2005.

<sup>40</sup> Dick K. Nanto and Emma Chanlett-Avery, *The North Korean Economy: Background and Policy Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2005), 28.

<sup>41</sup> David C. Kang, "Improving and Maturing, but Slowly," *Pacific Forum CSIS* (2004), [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.csis.org>; accessed March 8, 2005.

<sup>42</sup> "North Korea Says it Won't Deal with Japan at Nuclear Talks," *International Herald Tribune*, July 20, 2005.

While Japan has, in the past, been one of the forerunners for providing economic trade and food assistance to North Korea, the DPRK has been adamant about wanting Japan out of the Six-Party Talks. The North has believed the Japanese have an interest in expanding their region over the South Korean held Tokto islands. They also believe that Japanese presence at the talks will do more harm than good if they are allowed to participate.<sup>43</sup> Japan on the other hand has felt threatened by the North Koreans' weapons development. In a Japanese Defense White Paper, their concern over the Korean peninsula was spelled out.

The Korean peninsula is inseparably related with Japan geographically and historically, hence the maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean peninsula is of vital importance to the peace and stability of East Asian areas as a whole, including Japan. Today on the Korean peninsula, military tension has continued to prevail with more than 1.4 million ground forces of the Republic of Korea and North Korea deployed against each other across the demilitarized zone (DMZ)... The situation on the Korean peninsula is still unstable and fluid.<sup>44</sup>

The DPRK has test fired their long range and medium range missiles over the Sea of Japan to prove their military capabilities. In May 1993 the DPRK test-fired a Rodong missile into the Sea of Japan and in August 1998 it was a Daepodung-1 missile that went over mainland Japan.<sup>45</sup> As a result, Japan feels threatened by North Korea's nuclear program. Their goal is to protect Japan from the North's missiles and stop the development of the nuclear program. They have continued to side with the United States in their position. Because of this hard alliance with the United States, North Korea believes that getting Japan out of the Six-Party Talks will enhance their position at the six-party talks along with China and Russia's help. Diplomatic relations between the DPRK and Japan have certainly become worse in the last few years. Because of this, Japan still maintains a close economic relationship with South Korea and works toward

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Lee, "U.S. and Japanese Policies Toward Korean Reunification," 128.

<sup>45</sup> Kaseda, "Japan and the Korean Peace Process," 120.

more bilateral relations; yet must still tread lightly with any action toward the DPRK. South Korea has adamantly cautioned Japan against imposing any sanctions while the North has blasted it. Japan must maintain its relations with South Korea while addressing their security issues with the DPRK in the Six-Party Talks. They may need to place their abduction issues on standby until after discussions have yielded an end to the nuclear talks.

### **C. REUNIFICATION AS A RESULT OF WAR**

#### **1. Japanese Reaction to Aggression**

Japan's position towards Korean reunification mirrors that of the United States. They believe that they should maintain an engagement policy with North Korea that involves the cooperation of their allies, the U.S. and South Korea. Japan feels that reunification should come as a result of long diplomatic negotiations and not from either North Korean or American aggression. While Japan does not have military forces that would be sent to the peninsula, they would support the American military forces with their "self defense forces" in the result of a war. Japan would react negatively to any North Korean attack by supporting the U.S. and others fighting against them and more than likely support any U.S. preemptive action. It is important to remember that Japan would directly feel any action that resulted in aggression on the peninsula. As it was stated before, if the DPRK were to attack first in order to reunify the peninsula, it would not only hit targets on the South Korean side of the DMZ but Japan as well. Many of the American forces that would be sent in defense of the ROK would be coming from Japan and the DPRK would consider them a priority target. While the North's conventional forces have deteriorated over the years from lack of funds, their ballistic missile capabilities as well as chemical and biological weapons have gradually strengthened over the years.<sup>46</sup> If action were to be taken as a preemptive measure, it would be because both South Korea and Japan would have been threatened with the North's nuclear weapons. It would be in Japan's interest to support American forces if the United States were to

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<sup>46</sup> "Northeast Asian Security After Korean Reconciliation Or Reunification - Preparing the U.S.-Japan Alliance," Summary Report, p. 8.

attack the DPRK preemptively. Supporting the United States and the South Korean governments would give Japan more leverage at the table when reunification talks begin.

## **2. Options for Japan**

Japan would be affected by the aggressive behavior of the DPRK as they put up their last defenses before falling. Missiles would fly over the Sea of Japan and hit the cities of Japan. Japan would maintain an alliance with the allied powers against the DPRK regime. While Japanese might be affected on their own soil from the North Korean missiles, Japan probably would not send their Self Defense Forces to the peninsula. Both United States and Chinese forces would have made their military prowess over the DPRK known by quickly ending any war and any action by Japan might scare North Koreans who remember the Japanese actions more than sixty years ago. To support reunification, Japan would invest in the North and thereby encourage North Koreans to remain within their borders. Most of this investment would be done by non-governmental organizations; however, Japan would facilitate the path for their businesses to invest in infrastructure projects such as energy generation, telecommunications, highways, ports, and railroads.<sup>47</sup> They would also give food and medical supplies to the international organizations which would be alleviating the suffering of the North Korean people. Japan must use their relations with the United States to support their actions during the aggression and afterwards. In the event of any act of aggression on the peninsula, American forces would be called on to defend the South Korean half of the peninsula. Initial external American forces would come from the U.S. bases stationed in Japan and then follow on forces would seek supplies from the Japanese islands. Japan would support the action against the DPRK by assisting the American military.

## **3. Effects on Japan**

Japan would significantly feel the effects of a Korea reunified through aggression due to their proximity with the North and the range of their missiles.

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<sup>47</sup> "A Blueprint for U.S. Policy Toward a Unified Korea," in CSIS International Security Program [database online]. Washington, D.C. August 2002 [cited 2005]. Available from <http://www.csis.org>

Japan could suffer, once again, from the effects of any chemical or biological weapons. Because they do not yet have a ballistic missile defense to defend against the threat of North Korean missiles, Japan would have to rebuild a portion of their destroyed infrastructure. The cost to rebuild would take away from the assistance needed in the North. A war-torn Japan would not have the necessary economic assets to invest in a reunified Korea.

If they were hit with North Korean missiles, Japan, as a war participant, would have more of a say in reunification. In other words, they would not only be at the “table” because of their alliance with the United States, but would legitimately and, perhaps more persuasively, be a part of any post-war discussions concerning Korean reunification. An aggressive reunification could result in the powerful U.S. military maintaining their position on the peninsula as they rebuilt and unified the new nation. This would be beneficial for the Japanese who would once again feel secure with the United States security umbrella. Former North Korean defenses as well as their nuclear program would be monitored by United States and UN officials. A great benefit from American forces retaining a check on the Korean military is that they would also keep the Chinese military under control with a presence on the Korean peninsula. Therefore, Japan would not need to further build-up their security defenses in the form of a greater military or in a nuclear program, both of which would threaten China in their own security.

Another scenario might be that U.S. forces would be substantially reduced or removed from the peninsula if the Chinese had made an agreement with the U.S. prior to military action.<sup>48</sup> The American forces might be there long enough with the aid of China to reestablish order and peace for a few years. In this event, Japan would be without their security umbrella and might need to strengthen their military and start a nuclear program. Again this would cause alarm in China and the reunified Korea as they recall Japan’s militaristic history.

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<sup>48</sup> Charles Wolf Jr. and Kamil Akramov, "How the System might Unravel: Scenarios for Reunification," in *North Korean Paradoxes: Circumstances, Costs, and Consequences of Korean Reunification* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND corporation, 2005).

## **D. REUNIFICATION AS A RESULT OF THE DPRK'S COLLAPSE**

### **1. Options for Japan**

Japan would support Korean reunification if there were a collapse of the DPRK in the North. Just as Japan would provide the majority of their support through economic investments and aid in the war/aggression reunification scenario, so too would they use their investment opportunities in the event of a North Korean collapse. Japanese assistance would be important during the unification process in order to solidify a ROK-led unification. Only after closely coordinating with the ROK should Japan make investments in North Korea. Japan should make strides to inform the North Korean people of the positive aspects of a capitalist economy, spread the idea of democracy, and help them gain access to outside information.<sup>49</sup> Japan's support should also include assisting and training the people in technical skills such as agriculture, fisheries, light industry, and other special knowledge skill areas.<sup>50</sup>

Another way in which Japan could support Korean reunification is to aid in the flow of refugees. Refugees would be fleeing from the collapsing nation by the thousands into Russian and Chinese borders, as well as to the sea. By close coordination with the U.S. Navy and South Korea, Japan would use their Maritime Self Defense Force to rescue the boat people and provide shelter on one of the islands in the Sea of Japan.<sup>51</sup> Japan would, furthermore, support the United States and their military forces sent to the peninsula, to maintain order in the North or South. Any interim government set up to maintain peace and order would be led by foreign intervention. Japan would support the Washington's stance on this interim government. Either through supporting a North Korean who is anti-Kim or keeping Chinese officials out of power, Japan would sustain their position to have a unified Korea which is no longer a security threat to them.

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<sup>49</sup> "Northeast Asian Security After Korean Reconciliation Or Reunification - Preparing the U.S.-Japan Alliance," 17.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>51</sup> "Northeast Asian Security After Korean Reconciliation Or Reunification - Preparing the U.S.-Japan Alliance," 9.



## **2. Effects on Japan**

Like the previous reunification scenario, Japan will need to invest more of their money into the Korean peninsula. Money which would have otherwise been invested in their businesses will be redirected toward the peninsula. More humanitarian and financial aid would be sent as well. Another aspect of this reunification scenario is the question of who will fill the vacuum of leadership once the system collapses in the North. If the void has been filled by militaristic followers of Kim who wish to announce their military prowess, then Japan should be wary of possible missile attacks or threats to their nation. If China has stepped in to advise and assume a leadership position, their influence over reunification could be enough to scratch out Japanese participation. China would have moved their own forces onto the border regions so that they could control the flow of refugees into their nation. Wary of American military power so close to their borders, Chinese influence would also require that the U.S. forces be removed from the peninsula upon reunification. The exit of U.S. forces would also mean the deletion of Japan's security umbrella. Linking the two powers would mean a greater direct security threat to Japan which, as of yet, has no capabilities to combat that danger to their homeland. If these events were to occur, Japan could take a defensive posture in building both a defensive military and nuclear program of their own.

## **E. REUNIFICATION AS A RESULT OF INTER-KOREAN OR MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY**

### **1. Options for Japan**

Japan wants an active role in the multilateral and inter-Korean relations for the purpose of reunification. The best way that Japan can support the reunification under diplomatic terms and still maintain the maximum amount of influence over the peninsula is close trilateral policy coordination with the ROK and the United States before and after unification. This coordination can shape the environment so there is no competition between China, Russia, South Korea, United States, and Japan.<sup>52</sup> Japan has been working with the ROK together for

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<sup>52</sup> Yamaji, "Policy Recommendations for Japan: Unification of the Korean Peninsula," 15.

years as they have tried to open negotiations with the DPRK. In order for Japan not to undermine inter-Korean relations and assist North Korea's economic and military modernization, South Korea drew up five principles to guide them. The five principles were: "Seoul and Tokyo should have close advance consultations; Japan should take into consideration 'meaningful' progress in the inter-Korean dialogue; Japan should not offer financial compensation to North Korea until their relations become fully normalized, and these compensatory funds should not be used to build up the North's military power; North Korea should be encouraged to emerge from its isolation and pursue reforms; and Japan should urge Pyongyang to sign the agreement for international inspection of its nuclear facilities."<sup>53</sup> The relationship between Japan and Korea should make strides to move away from the historical animosity and towards a more positive identity.<sup>54</sup> Effects would be minimized and it would help achieve the ROK-led unification if this close coordination were continued and extended to the United States. The first necessary step with this security triangle is to closely coordinate with the other nations in order to dismantle the North Korean nuclear weapons program.

Japan should follow the following levels for dismantling the nuclear weapons while closely consulting with the United States and ROK. The first level is to continue the current diplomatic actions through the Six-Party Talks. If the Six-Party Talks continue to yield no result, then Japan will support a discussion of the nuclear program at the United Nations. Chinese cooperation will be needed to resolve this issue; however, the trilateral group of nations should not depend on China so much that they then increase their influence over the peninsula during reunification.<sup>55</sup> Offering North Korea more of the "carrot" and less of the stick through energy needs and establishing diplomatic relations might be sufficient to persuade the North to dismantle. However, the North Koreans could see more benefits in maintaining their nuclear program than what Japan

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<sup>53</sup> Lee, "U.S. and Japanese Policies Toward Korean Reunification," 134.

<sup>54</sup> Victor D. Cha, "Perspectives on the Future of the Korean Peninsula: Defensive Realism and Japan's Approach Toward Korean Reunification," *The National Bureau of Asian Research* 14, no. 1 (June 2003): 27.

<sup>55</sup> Lee, "U.S. and Japanese Policies Toward Korean Reunification," 134.

and the other nations are able to offer them. Some of the DPRK's benefits include: regime survival; enhancing national pride; negotiating withdrawal of U.S. forces; offsetting military inferiority to ROK/U.S. forces and possibly gaining superiority over the ROK; obtaining revenue by exporting nuclear devices and technology; and dissuading the United States from intervening on the Korean peninsula.<sup>56</sup> If the first level of diplomatic efforts fails, the follow-on step is to initiate measures which will make Kim Jong-il think that the nuclear program no longer serves his long-term interests. Measures can be taken such as economic sanctions, enhanced defense measures for their own citizens if U.S. military deterrence fails and North Korea decides to strike back, and a detailed plan for North Korea to agree to for dismantling its nuclear program.<sup>57</sup>

Another significant way in which Japan will support the reunification of Korea is by extending assistance to the ROK in order to assure the ROK-led unification. The U.S.-ROK relationship will be critical in Japan's further assistance to Korea. As long as U.S. forces are maintained on the peninsula and security ties between the United States and ROK are kept intact, Japan will uphold their investments. If there is a clear sign that Korea will not unify under terms which are favorable to Japan, then it will become difficult for them to continue their financial assistance. Japan will continue to support the two Koreas as they work toward a diplomatic solution with the aid of the United States and Japan. They realize that China and Russia might play a role in the diplomacy as well, however, if they begin to take hold and sway multilateral talks too much in their favor, Japan will discontinue their backing.

## **2. Effects on Japan**

Japan would feel economic effects from this multilateral and inter-Korean diplomatic reunification just as it did with the other reunification scenarios. The big difference in this scenario would be that more investments and aid would be given to the South and North Korean states even before national unification takes place. Through this gradual reunification, Japan and the other nations'

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 134.

investments and financial assistance will bring North Korea toward a market economy. This economy could continue to grow stronger and threaten Japan's markets. Korea could become an economic as well as diplomatic rival to Japan in the future, a less than desired effect. Despite this possible outcome, Japan still must help finance Korean reunification so as to avoid a "harsh landing" which could have repercussions for Seoul, Tokyo, and the region overall.<sup>58</sup>

Although Japan has some fears of an economically strong reunified Korea which would compete with them, it is the rise of Korean nationalism that panics them more. A unified Korea could turn to China for assistance if an emotional conflict were to occur between Japan and Korea. If U.S. influence were not there to curb Korea's nationalism, it would be directed toward Japan and "the possibility of a unified Korea turning to China to counter Japan, and making efforts toward its own military build up, cannot be denied."<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, if the United States were to maintain their military and diplomatic influence over the peninsula, Japan would be able to maintain their sway as well.

## **F. NATIONAL OPTIONS FOR JAPAN**

### **1. Factors Which Will Shape a Future Korea**

Japan's part in reunification has been largely because of the alliance with the United States. While Japan can never attain a greater influence than the United States over the peninsula through supporting reunification, they need to overcome their history and become a more trusted supporter for Korea. In order for Japan to do this, there are three major factors which need to be overcome and which will shape Japan's policy toward reunification. The first and most important factor to Japan and all nations involved is to dismantle the North Korean nuclear weapons program through diplomatic negotiations at the Six-Party Talks. These talks, should they bring about the eventual cessation of the nuclear program, could continue toward negotiating policy of unification. Japan will need to justify their importance in these talks so that North Korea will not be

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<sup>58</sup> Cha, "Perspectives on the Future of the Korean Peninsula: Defensive Realism and Japan's Approach Toward Korean Reunification," 27.

<sup>59</sup> Young-Sun Ji, "Conflicting Visions for Korean Reunification," Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University (June 2001).

able to kick them out. On July 20, 2005, just days before the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks were to begin; North Korea openly stated that they would not deal with Japan. Japan had stated earlier that they wished to bring up the abduction issue when the talks resumed. The South Korean Unification Minister had even agreed with the DPRK's statements in asking Japan to refrain from adding other issues to the nuclear talks.<sup>60</sup> Japan must drop their separate national issues in order to sustain their position in the Talks.

A second factor which will shape future Korea is the involvement of China. If China is allowed to hold political sway over North Korea during the nuclear talks, they could use that to their advantage when reunification negotiations come around. Lastly, the third factor is the removal of American forces from the peninsula. Whether this is as a result of a decision made by the unified Korea, China, or even the U.S. themselves, the removal of the American military would mean a lack of security for Japan.

## **2. Best Case Scenario for Japan**

The ideal scenario for Japan is a multilateral and inter-Korean diplomacy that promotes reunification and gives Japan an advantage in the regional balance of power. The following four elements would be focused on for a unified Korea: the political and economic systems; its strategic choices; and its defense forces.<sup>61</sup> Politically, Japan would best be served with a unified Korea which shares their political values. Bilateral relations would be maintained and confidence between the two countries would grow exponentially if the unified Korea were to have a political system which shares the values of freedom, democracy, and rule of law.<sup>62</sup> For the economic system, Japan would prefer a unified Korea to have a strong capitalist economy. They currently have a strong trading relationship with the ROK which they would not like to lose. Strategically, it would be beneficial if a unified Korea were to align with the United States and allow the American forces to be stationed on the peninsula. This alliance would

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<sup>60</sup> "North Korea Says it Won't Deal with Japan at Nuclear Talks."

<sup>61</sup> Yamaji, "Policy Recommendations for Japan: Unification of the Korean Peninsula," 5.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

create a security triangle which would secure Korea from unwanted authority by China or Russia.<sup>63</sup> This would also benefit Japan. Sustaining the American military in Korea means that Japanese security would be ensured. The fourth element of Japan's ideal scenario is the lack of defensive forces in unified Korea. Japan does not want Korea to possess "offensive weapons that could threaten Japan, such as medium-range ballistic missiles, long-range bombers, and above all, nuclear weapons."<sup>64</sup> Lastly, any expansion of their naval capabilities would have to be coordinated through the United States. Japan would have the most influence and diplomatic relationship with a Korea that unified under these elements.

### **3. Worst Case Scenario for Japan**

While Japan's ideal scenario puts them in the best position in the region for political and economic influence, the worst case scenario needs to be looked at before any policy can be made. In this scenario, reunification would come as a result of an aggressive war in which the North Koreans used a nuclear weapon to hold an advantage over the ROK military forces. In this case, the reunification would be more rapid and not gradual enough for outside powers such as the Japan and U.S. alliance to "win" over the North Korean leaders. Some of the four elements from the ideal scenario will be used to describe this situation. The political system would be under the North Korean control and not promote freedom and democracy. With the possibility of Chinese assistance, Korea would disband the U.S.-ROK treaty, demand that American forces are withdrawn, and sustain the nuclear program. Strategically in this scenario, unified Korea would ally itself with China so that its national power would exceed that of Japan and the United States.<sup>65</sup> This alliance would threaten Japan directly. The last element is unified Korea's defense posture. If Korea were to build up their military in conjunction with China while also maintaining the nuclear program, Japan would need to do the same. An increase of Japanese forces might stir up

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Yamaji, "Policy Recommendations for Japan: Unification of the Korean Peninsula," 5.

the region as thoughts of colonization rekindled their historical fears. If this scenario would come to fruition, Japan would need to be in a defensive posture until one of the elements was changed.

#### **4. Policy Approaches**

The previous years have shown that Japan has almost no role to play in unification issues such as the North-South dialogue, arms control and disarmament, and the peace treaty conclusion. Japan understands that the future reunification should be administered by Koreans but recognizes that they have a great stake in the outcome. Reunification will cause Japan to rethink their national security, defense posture, and prosperity overall.<sup>66</sup> They need to start developing policy approaches to help ensure that their interests are met when unification finally comes around. The first step in developing a policy is for Japan to declare support for Korea's unification. This could be accomplished by setting up "think tanks" which discuss and develop Japanese strategy for helping Korea unify. Through their actions, Japan will provide Koreans with evidence that they support their actions. Japan will, however, first need to dismantle the North Korean nuclear program. They should do this through a trilateral joint action with the ROK and the United States. It should start with the diplomatic efforts that are ongoing with the Six-Party Talks and move on toward other efforts such as economic sanctions. The second step in developing Japanese policy is to provide significant economic assistance to the peninsula during and after the unification process. This assistance will go a long way toward positively influencing the Korean people's perception of Japan as well as building up the economy in the north. The third step in developing Japanese policy should be to exercise restraint with their Self Defense Force.<sup>67</sup> Japan will cultivate a trusting relationship with Korea by not acquiring offensive weapons. A fourth step is to ensure a long-term alliance by establishing multilateral frameworks for security dialogues.<sup>68</sup> These frameworks will contribute to the reduction of Japanese-

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<sup>66</sup> Yamaji, "Policy Recommendations for Japan: Unification of the Korean Peninsula," 5.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

Korean friction. The last step of policy development is to address the history issues. Japan's actions in history were horrendous and, to make matters worse, they have recently glossed over the atrocities through their statements in textbooks and visits by the Prime Minister to the Yasukuni shrine (a shrine dedicated to the fallen men of the Japanese military). By setting up an official program to bridge the gap between Japanese and Korean history, Japan will address the issues and remedy what they have done wrong in the past. By implementing these measures, Japan will make more of an impact on Korea's unification.



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### **III. CAN CHINA REGAIN THEIR “LITTLE BROTHER” RELATIONSHIP WITH A REUNIFIED KOREA?**

#### **A. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

China has shared a long standing relationship with Korea since ancient history. As early as the fifth century, the combination of geography, culture, and history have all positioned Chosun (Korea) as a loyal “little brother” in China’s tributary system. Their alliance became fully institutionalized during the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910).<sup>69</sup> Korea’s early history showed a divided peninsula in three separate kingdoms: Shilla, Koguryo, and Paekche. In 668 with the political and military alliance of China’s Tang dynasty, the Chosun peninsula was unified into a single country.<sup>70</sup> With China’s assistance Korea would remain united until 1905 except for occasional and brief periods of political division. Many years after Tang the Chosun people would maintain their vassal relationship to Ming China, however, they would relate to other nations on an equal footing. Even when the Manchus conquered northern China and establish the Qing Dynasty, the people of Chosun reluctantly maintained their vassal relationship.<sup>71</sup> Except for relations with China, the Chosun land under the Yi Dynasty sealed themselves off from the rest of the world and became known as “the Hermit Kingdom”. Any foreigners that ventured onto the peninsula were expelled so any influence other than Chinese was non-existent.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, tensions rose between Japan and China as Korea was placed in the center of their conflict. Many years of conflict over the Korean peninsula would bring competition between Russia, Japan and China. The Treaty of Inchon, an agreement between Russia and Japan, weakened China’s

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<sup>69</sup> Quansheng Zhao, "China and the Korean Peace Process," in *The Korean Peace Process and the Four Powers*, Tae-Hwan Kwak and Seung-Ho Joo, eds. (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2003), 99.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>71</sup> Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas : A Contemporary History*, (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 3.

claims of suzerainty and strengthened Japan's position on the peninsula.<sup>72</sup> The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 brought Japan across the Sea once again to the Korean peninsula. Japan solidified its position of influence over China with its defeat and the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki. After this treaty tributary relations between China and Korea came to an end. Furthermore, China lost all direct influence over Korea when Japan formally claimed Korea as their colony in 1910.<sup>73</sup> Through Japan's occupation, Korea was shut off from China and the rest of the world. Any foreign relations that China would have with Korea did not occur until the DPRK was formally established in the North under Russian influence. Yet because of American influence, China would neither have relations nor influence with South Korea until the Cold War had ended.

## **B. HISTORY AFTER KOREA'S DIVISION**

While the Soviet Union might have been responsible at the onset of the Cold War for the birth of the DPRK, it was China and its involvement in the Korean War which allowed it to survive. The combination of historical connections and national interest has bonded China with Korea. China was especially connected to the DPRK because of a shared security alliance. Based on a fear of the United States and Japan promoting democracy over communism, the DPRK and China would become comrades. A famous quote by Chinese government official Chou En-lai, spelled out the "lips and teeth" relationship between China and North Korea. "Common struggles have bound our peoples in a profound militant friendship... our friendship is cemented with blood; it has been long tested and will stand up to future tests... The Chinese people will forever stand by the fraternal Korean people in their struggle to defend the security of their homeland."<sup>74</sup> The friendship was forged throughout history but cemented by Chinese remembrance of the assistance North Koreans provided in the Peoples Republic of China's (PRC's) victory over the Nationalists

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<sup>72</sup> Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas : A Contemporary History*, (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 6.

<sup>73</sup> Zhao, "China and the Korean Peace Process," 100.

<sup>74</sup> Robert R. Simmons, "China's Cautious Relations with North Korea and Indochina," *Asian Survey* 11, no. 7 (Jul. 1971): 629.

during China's civil war. North Korea in turn also recognizes the support China offered the DPRK during the Korean War.<sup>75</sup> China reentered the Korean peninsula after years of Japanese occupation and five years of U.S./Soviet influence in October 1950 when they crossed the Yalu River and confronted the American forces. Three years later as the confrontation ended in a stalemate, China had suffered from 366,000 casualties.<sup>76</sup> Koreans have remembered China's actions as they came to the aid of the DPRK when in need even though they were not formally allied. This alliance would be signed later. On July 11, 1961 Pyongyang signed a "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance" with the PRC which repeated their declaration of support for security and economic allegiance to one another.<sup>77</sup>

Following the Korean War and the division of the peninsula, the South Korean economy and infrastructure were being built up by Western investments and U.S.-Japanese aid packages; North Korea could only rely on assistance from Beijing and Moscow. In a time when the North needed to rebuild itself, the Sino-Soviet split made things more difficult for North Korea to gain stature in the world. The northern peninsula formed into blocks of competition between China and the USSR as they each sought North Korea's allegiance.<sup>78</sup> North Korea which counted on security and aid from both nations played them off against one another in order to gain maximum economic advantages. North Korea showed their support for China and the Soviets while never formally aligning against either one of them. They needed to hold on to Soviet aid since Beijing was only able to provide half the amount of aid that Moscow could. If the DPRK was to formally align with China, they would have lost heavy amounts of Soviet investments and aid. Two major international crises in October 1962, the Sino-

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<sup>75</sup> "The Yalu River and its Security Implications for China," in American University, The School of International Service [database online]. Washington, D.C. May 12, 1998 [cited 2005]. Available from <http://www.american.edu/TED/ice/yalu.htm>

<sup>76</sup> Zhao, "China and the Korean Peace Process," 100.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress : China's Search for Security*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 94.

Indian border clash and the Cuban missile crisis, proved that the “lips and teeth” relationship with China was stronger than the desire for Soviet aid.<sup>79</sup> The North Koreans responded angrily to Soviet actions that withheld support to the Chinese in the Sino-Indian border clash, and gave in to the United States during the Cuban Missile Crisis. North Korea’s actions, along with a Sino-North Korean alliance, led to a final Soviet withdrawal of assistance and the isolation of North Korea from the Communist bloc.<sup>80</sup> China and North Korea would remain close allies despite varying relations from year to year.

During the 1950’s, China felt threatened by the encroaching Western powers along its borders. Their perception of Western imperialism led to substantial military support for the North Koreans against the American and South Korean forces. Despite China’s alliance with Pyongyang, they failed to support a North Korean military attack on South Korea. Chinese forces were pulled out of the peninsula in 1958 and a policy for a stable Korean peninsula unifying under peaceful terms was adopted.<sup>81</sup> Their change in ideology from when they supported the North Korean forces has been the product of a decreased personal attachment with DPRK leaders in the Chinese leadership. Deng Xiaoping and his party leaders had previously forged a supportive relationship with Kim Il Sung, extending sympathy to the North Korean people. Under the older leaders, North Korea represented comrades in arms that needed their assistance.<sup>82</sup> Chinese foreign policy now has become more “businesslike” as Beijing is more and more frustrated at their attempts to modernize North Korea. In the period from 1990-1997, North Korea’s economy showed negative growth, while drought and scorching heat led to widespread famine. Many Chinese have regarded North Korea as China of yesterday when they were

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<sup>79</sup> Simmons, "China's Cautious Relations with North Korea and Indochina," 629-644.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Zhao, "China and the Korean Peace Process," 102.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 112.

going through the Cultural Revolution.<sup>83</sup> Chinese public opinion toward South Korea, however, began to be much more favorable.

Beginning in the 1980s, it was clear to Beijing that developing relations with South Korea would increase China's leverage on the peninsula and in East Asia. China's leverage would be increased by tapping into South Korea's modernization programs. Modernization through economic development could not be realized without South Korea supplying advanced technology, capital, markets, and managerial skills.<sup>84</sup> Also, Chinese interest in maintaining a peaceful peninsula meant that they had to be balanced toward the two Koreas and not just one of the two. Even though North Korea was not happy with China's changing attitude toward South Korea, China had still maintained a degree of influence over Pyongyang. In late 1990, Beijing was influential in reversing Pyongyang's 'One Korea' policy by stating that they would no longer veto South Korea's application to join the United Nations.<sup>85</sup> China's first step was to enhance bilateral relations by setting up trade offices in Seoul and Beijing by October 1990. The offices quickly opened up the following year which led to normalization of relations between the two countries in 1992.<sup>86</sup> In the South, both China and the ROK trust in one other and maintain close relations that are mutually beneficial. Their relationship will bring more business opportunities to each of their countries and make them more competitive.<sup>87</sup> Since the normalization of ties with both Koreas, China has played a significant role as balancer for both countries. In June 1999, Chinese and North Korean leadership met for high-level talks. Only a month later, the South Korean defense minister visited Beijing indicating that the ROK wanted China to play a "bridging role"

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<sup>83</sup> Zhao, "China and the Korean Peace Process," 112.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>87</sup> "President Hu Jintao Meets with His ROK Counterpart Roh Moo-Hyun," in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China [database online]. Beijing, China November 11, 2004 [cited 2005]. Available from <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>.

between North and South Korea.<sup>88</sup> China has placed a significant emphasis on their influence over the peninsula in order to contain the U.S-Japanese alliance. To counterbalance a perceived hostile threat by these two powers, China desires to have greater leverage over Pyongyang as well as Seoul.

China understands that the North has opened up their economy a little more towards South Korean and Japanese interests and investments; however, China is still the main source of aid and investments in the country. In a letter to Kim Jong Il, Jiang Zemin restated his position that “the North and South should achieve independent and peaceful reunification through dialogues and negotiations, and will, as always, continue to work actively for the maintenance of peace and stability on the Peninsula.”<sup>89</sup> Despite all the rhetoric from the Chinese leadership and governmental press, the Chinese officials are in a wait and see attitude toward the reunification of the Korean peninsula. While they acknowledge that the Koreans should proceed with plans for reunification, they know that the actual unification will be a long way off.<sup>90</sup> Until then the DPRK must find a way to enhance its economy and link it to trading with the outside world. The dismantling of nuclear weapons in Yongbyon has been made a foreign policy priority. The United States has helped by placing China in a powerful position to negotiate the dismantling of the nuclear program in the North, a position that might aid China in obtaining more influence over a reunified Korea. Until these major goals have been obtained, China is in no way threatened by the reunified Korea. They will only maintain their foreign policy of outward support while also continuing to wait and see what new power balances will be brought to their borders. Nonetheless China pays close attention to the various ways Korean unification may be achieved. These scenarios and their implications for China follow.

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<sup>88</sup> Zhao, "China and the Korean Peace Process," 173.

<sup>89</sup> "President Jiang Zemin's Letters of Congratulations on the DPRK-ROK Summit," in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China [database online]. Beijing, China November 15, 2000 [cited 2005]. Available from <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>.

<sup>90</sup> Robert G. Sutter, *Chinese Policy Priorities and their Implications for the United States*, (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 101.

## **C. REUNIFICATION AS A RESULT OF WAR**

### **1. Chinese Reaction to Aggression**

China would have to react to any aggression occurring on the Korean peninsula primarily because of the threat to their border security. China would no longer support North Korea if they were to militarily attack South Korea. The Chinese want to see a peaceful and harmonious peninsula reunify under these conditions. China has a strong trade relationship with South Korea and would not want to jeopardize their trade because of Northern aggression. South Korea is able to provide China with valuable experience in Chinese industrialization, something that would be jeopardized if the DPRK were to attack the South.<sup>91</sup> While American forces would quickly repel the North Korean forces back to across the DMZ, with possible UN sanctions, the American forces may cross into North Korean territory and along the Chinese border. This action by the American forces would threaten the careful balance of power in Northeast Asia.

On a different note, the DPRK could be threatened by American forces. An aggressive behavior by the American administration could be a way to deter North Korea, a member of President Bush's "Axis of Evil" triad, from using their nuclear weapons against South Korea or Japan. The Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance that was signed between China and North Korea is gray on the issue of whether China would enter into another war to defend the North Koreans.<sup>92</sup> However China might react with their forces, they would most assuredly support the North Korean government through military and economic funds. The threat of an American military action that was not sanctioned by the international community might bring Chinese forces along the North Korean border to defend their homeland.

### **2. Options for China**

In order for China to place the balance of power back in check so that neither North Korea nor the United States would find it advantageous to take

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<sup>91</sup> Joseph M. Conforti, "The China Model of Korean Reunification," *East Asia : An International Quarterly* 17, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 54.

<sup>92</sup> Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glaser, "Looking Across the Yalu: Chinese Assessments of North Korea," *Asian Survey* 35, no. 6 (Jun. 1995): 528-545.



action against each other, they should have four strategies for their foreign policy. The first of these strategies is to establish a neighboring power alliance with Russia. If China and Russia were to cooperate in political, economic, and security matters, then they would have more influence together over the Korean region. Security matters were established between the two nations by the recently established Shanghai Security Cooperative. A second strategy will be to maintain its interest over Pyongyang so that China will have greater political and strategic leverage over the Korean peninsula. The third strategy is for China to improve its relationship with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. Lastly, China will need to increase its community-building efforts in East Asia.<sup>93</sup> Through all of these strategies, China will maintain the balance of power or even pull it in their direction. If this were to happen, then both North Korea and the United States would not upset the balance by uniting the Korean peninsula under aggressive behavior.

### **3. Effects on China**

Beijing has avoided putting pressure on North Korea for nuclear disarmament economic sanctions. They fear that Pyongyang would answer with an aggressive and warlike move.<sup>94</sup> North Korea has been vocal about perceiving any economic sanctions as an aggressive move against their country. If taken to extremes, China believes the DPRK would not want to back down and might be drawn into a war. In the case of a war on the peninsula, there would be large-scale destruction of infrastructure in the South and more than likely the North would be devastated by the American and South Korean military arsenal. Potential chemical weapons may be used against the South or along the Chinese border. It is not of sound strategy for the North Koreans to use their inconsequential military technology against the Chinese who have been their friend throughout the DPRK's history; however China could still possibly be affected and would need to plan accordingly.

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<sup>93</sup> Zhao, "China and the Korean Peace Process," 110.

<sup>94</sup> Nathan and Ross, "The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress : China's Search for Security," 97.

China would ultimately need to worry about the flow of refugees into the northern territories of China. These refugees would drain the Chinese system and economy as well as possibly pursue territorial claims inside Manchuria once the Korean peninsula has been reunited and established as a viable nation-state and economy.<sup>95</sup> China does not want part of their industrial heartland in the northeast to fall into Korean hands, whether it is under unification policies or not. In March 2004, the Chinese Foreign Minister gave a press conference in which the question of North Korean refugees was raised. He explicitly stated that the North Koreans that are crossing into China are only illegal border crossers and not refugees. He stated, "It is noteworthy that a small number of people who are trying to politicize this issue and confuse the two concepts of illegal border crossers and so-called refugees. They even use the pretext of human rights concerns and encourage those illegal border crossers to create political incidents, for example, to force their ways into the foreign diplomatic or consular missions in China, which is not acceptable".<sup>96</sup> He stated that the issue of "illegal border crossers" is being handled in accordance with domestic law, international law, and humanitarian principles. It is obvious that with the close and continued friendship between China and North Korea, they would not accept the idea of refugees coming out of the North. However, regardless of what they call the North Koreans as they come over the border, it is a problem that the Chinese will have to deal with on a large scale if they see political or economic upheaval in the North prior to a reunification.

Lastly, an occupation of the North by the ROK or U.S. administrations would hold influence and command over the new united peninsula.<sup>97</sup> This action could prove horribly detrimental to the Chinese. American forces are already forward deployed on the peninsula and ready to take control of northern Korea if

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<sup>95</sup> Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 213.

<sup>96</sup> "Full Text of Chinese FM's Press Conference," *People's Daily Online*, March 07, 2004 2004, [database on-line]; available from People's Daily Online.

<sup>97</sup> Frank McNeil, Jeffery Lewis, and John Tai, "Great Power Interests in Korean Reunification," *The Center for Strategic and International Studies* (1998), [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.csis.org>; accessed September 20, 2004.

needed. Despite the friendly relations that China has had these past years with the United States, they do not want to see an American military presence in a unified Korea along the Chinese-Korean border. Some ROK analysts have even gone so far as to say that China could militarily intervene in this situation if they foresaw that American military presence would continue beyond Korean reunification.<sup>98</sup> An American military presence would not only mean more influence in the outcome of the Korean unification but the entire Northeast Asian region.

#### **D. REUNIFICATION AS A RESULT OF THE DPRK'S COLLAPSE**

##### **1. Options for China**

Chinese analysts believe that North Korea is currently stable, but can see threats that could potentially threaten the Kim leadership. According to senior Chinese military experts, "If Kim Jong-il pursues a rigid policy, the reformers could oppose him. It is also possible if Kim pursues reform he may be opposed by conservatives and be overthrown by them." In either case the experts believe that a power transition will be "accompanied by serious political turmoil and crisis."<sup>99</sup> Following the collapse of the North Korean government, China would be expected to be the first to offer military and economic assistance to South Korea to stabilize the North. They need to exploit opportunities to be the dominant influence along the peninsula rather than sitting back and letting the United States take control. One way for the Chinese to gain influence is by establishing political control over the northern region of the peninsula. It has been surmised that China has taken North Korean defectors and "reeducated" them to the Chinese system. If this is true, China would do well to send these North Koreans back into their homeland and put them into the governmental organizations.<sup>100</sup> By doing this, the Chinese will have loyal supporters in

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<sup>98</sup> Fei-Ling Wang, "Joining the Major Powers for the Status Quo: China's Views and Policy on Korean Reunification," *Pacific Affairs* 72, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 182.

<sup>99</sup> Garrett and Glaser, "Looking Across the Yalu: Chinese Assessments of North Korea," 531.

<sup>100</sup> "Catastrophic Collapse of North Korea Implications for the United States Military," in United States Army Command and General Staff College [database online]. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas [cited 2005]. Available from <http://www.kimsoft.com/korea/maxwell.htm#II>

powerful governmental positions. Another option for the Chinese is to establish dominance over the Tumen River Area Project. This program will benefit both the fallen North Korean economy as well as China's own economic strength.<sup>101</sup> Some of the main objectives of the Tumen River project are to attain greater growth and development for the people of the Tumen region and strengthen economic cooperation.<sup>102</sup> To China this will mean that imports and exports of their goods will have North Korean ports to use. While it will develop China's economy, it will successfully build up the Tumen region as well.

China's main goal is to successfully use their historical ties with the Korean people to establish a strong influence over the region while downplaying the United States and Japanese presence. To establish this dominant position, China will also need to divert investments and financial aid to the ROK so that they would not severely suffer from assuming the financial burdens of the North. Military personnel could be sent along the border region with Korea to prevent the flow of refugees into China and aid them with famine and medical issues. While using the military to show support for the Korean people, it would also put a military presence along North Korea's border preventing American forces from establishing their own stronghold over Pyongyang. China should take great heed in sending their forces over the border into North Korea, since it could be seen as an offensive action by the ROK and American military. By establishing the military along the North Korean border and into Manchuria, China will have curbed the American military from establishing themselves in the northern half of the peninsula and threatening Chinese security. Following the DPRK collapse, China will continue to strengthen its position over the peninsula with military and economic persuasion while drawing on its historical relations.

## **2. Effects on China**

Despite their close friendship, China views the DPRK government as one of the most unpredictable governments in the world. While they had a close

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Nicholas Eberstadt, "North Korea: Reform, Muddling through, Or Collapse?" in *One Korea? Challenges and Prospects for Reunification*, Thomas H. Henriksen and Kyongsoo Lho eds., (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1994), 22.

relationship with the late Kim Il-Sung, they have little confidence in the current leadership by Kim Jong-il, the son of Kim Il-Sung. China knows that the collapse of Kim Jong-il's government would have many worrisome repercussions. According to one analyst, "The Chinese leadership fears a North Korean collapse not because it wants to avoid the loss of another communist state, but because of the possible deleterious impact on China."<sup>103</sup> Some of the dangers to China would be the large flow of refugees, civil war in the North, and a possible North-South conflict that could spill into northeastern China. Concern over these factors might lead China to take action before they have to deal with the aftereffects. According to a senior Chinese military researcher, "China would not watch North Korea experience difficulties with both our hands in our pockets."<sup>104</sup>

The most prevalent belief from Korea scholars is that North Korea would collapse as a result of their economy. China has tried to develop the North's economy so that it could eventually support itself. They have had trouble incorporating the Chinese based economy model because of the DPRK leaderships' fears that success will threaten the regime and the North Korean Worker's Party that supports them.<sup>105</sup> Without an economic revival in the North, China fears that an economic collapse would bring devastating economic hardships to South Korea as well. Currently, South Korea ranks as one of China's top trading partners and sources for investment. In the event of an economic collapse, South Korean investment would have to be diverted to North Korea and away from China. This investment has made a dramatic impact on the Chinese economy as South Korean investments have risen from \$260 million in 1992 to over \$1.67 billion in 1994 and continue to rise.<sup>106</sup> But China not only fears the outcome from an economic collapse, but a political one as well. China

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<sup>103</sup> Garrett and Glaser, "Looking Across the Yalu: Chinese Assessments of North Korea," 538.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 539.

<sup>105</sup> Nathan and Ross, "The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress : China's Search for Security," 97.

<sup>106</sup> Roy, "China's Foreign Relations," 213.

as well as the world is not sure what the DPRK leaders would do when faced with the challenge of an economic collapse.

China, on the other hand, has been affiliated with both the North and the South Korean economies as they have relationships on both sides of the border. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, China has been the DPRK's largest trading partner. By bypassing the United Nations and giving aid directly to Pyongyang, they are able to use their assistance as leverage to pursue their own political purposes and goals.<sup>107</sup> An economic collapse of North Korea would cause China to redirect more funds to the Korean peninsula than they are currently sending to the North. They would also have to worry about the massive flow of refugees across their borders and along one of China's industrial hubs. A follow on interest after a few years of reunification on the peninsula might be for the Korean nation to reclaim the territory that is now one of the Chinese industrial centers. If a heavy flow of Korean refugees were to inhabit that area, Korea would have more of a claim to that soil since Koreans already inhabit the area. Lastly, a further concern of the Chinese would be that with an economic collapse in the North, it would bring a heavy Japanese and United States influence right along their border once Korea unifies. While relations have been improving over the past years with the United States, China still does not want their citizens to see how much better they could prosper under a democratic Korean society.

## **E. REUNIFICATION AS A RESULT OF INTER-KOREAN OR MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY**

### **1. Options for China**

Out of the three reunification scenarios, inter-Korean or multilateral diplomacy is the only one that asks the Koreans to make the process gradual so that all powers involved will have time to adapt to the new nation. China would benefit from this gradual process. A rapid reunification under terms of aggression or a collapse could bring the American military closer to the border than the Chinese would like. Reunification under the terms of multilateral diplomacy asks all powers to put their concerns on the table and work them out.

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<sup>107</sup> Roy, "China's Foreign Relations," 213.

China's main concerns will be Sino-American relations and the American presence on the Korean border. While China realizes that an American military presence stabilizes any situation that might arise with Japan, they do not want American presence on the peninsula once the peninsula is reunified.<sup>108</sup>

China's main tool for imposing their reunification ideals upon the two Koreas will be the Beijing Six Power Talks. At the insistence of Washington, U.S.-DPRK nuclear talks have been expanded to include multilateralism in hopes of applying the maximum amount of pressure on Korean leaders. Because of their political as well as economic ties to North Korea, China maintains a powerful and influential position in the nuclear dialogues. Talks in August 2003, February 2004, and July 2005 were held in Beijing. Based on their powerful influence, the United States has unsuccessfully tried to apply pressure to sway Chinese opinions. China has maintained throughout the talks that economic sanctions were not to be used on the North Korean state. China was deliberate in maintaining their normal trade with their friend and neighbor when they were asked to reduce their food and oil shipments to North Korea.<sup>109</sup> China, like most of the other six party participants, has always opposed any use of force and held fast to engaging North Korea on diplomatic terms. They have opposed any action to take the issue to the United Nations because they do not want to see a communist regime collapse. Along those same lines, they do not want the American military so close to their borders in a war that would send North Korean refugees into their country.<sup>110</sup> In a statement made by China's delegate to the talks, Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi, on August 26, 2003 "the Korean Peninsula should be nuclear-free. At the same time, [North Korea's] security concerns should also be addressed through ... dialogue and peaceful talks."<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Wang, "Joining the Major Powers for the Status Quo: China's Views and Policy on Korean Reunification," 184.

<sup>109</sup> Joseph Kahn and David E. Sanger, "China Rules Out using Sanctions on North Korea," *New York Times*, May 11 2005, p. A.1.

<sup>110</sup> Henry S. Rowen, "Kim Jong Il must Go," *Policy Review*, no. 121 (Oct-Dec 2003): 3.

<sup>111</sup> Paul Kerr, "Other Participants' Views on the North Korea Talks," *Arms Control Today* 33, no. 7 (Sep 2003): 26.

An option for China to impose on the reunified Koreans would be the “China Model” economy. It is called this because of the economic development zones that are in southeastern China. It is feasible in the North because they have already established one of the same economic zones, the RajinSonbong Free Economic and Trade Zone, in the northernmost part of the country.<sup>112</sup> This would be a South Korean led conglomerate since most of the investors would be South Korean corporations. This model would raise the standard of living and industrial productivity gradually throughout the North. The North Korean leadership would be in favor of it as well since the zones would expand selectively and under government management.<sup>113</sup> This situation would be ideal for the DPRK to maintain their political leadership while avoiding a reunification by default. It would also be ideal for China since the introduction of foreign investments into North Korea with its subsequent rise in standard of living would mean less dependence on China. More importantly, by sustaining their leadership in North Korea, China will benefit from the absence of American presence and influence along their borders.

## **2. Effects on China**

Chinese policy toward involvement in the Korean reunification dialogue has done an about face from past decades. Previously, China believed that nations had the right to develop any self-defense weapons that they choose. By involving outside powers in Korea’s reunification proceedings China worried that a precedent would be set with regards to involving outside powers. If Japan, Russia, and the United States are used to involving themselves in unification issues, China will have more problems than they would like when it comes time to reunify with the island of Taiwan. However, China sees North Korea and other nations surrounding them as a security matter and inaction might be more destabilizing than the precedent that might be set.<sup>114</sup> In a recent magazine

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<sup>112</sup> Conforti, "The China Model of Korean Reunification," 54.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ching-Ching Ni, "THE WORLD; China Looks Like Winner in N. Korea Talks; using its Leverage on its Reclusive Neighbor, Beijing Plays a Key Role in Bringing U.S. and Pyongyang Together to Discuss Region's Stability." *Los Angeles Times*, Apr 24 2003, p. A.3.



called *Oriental Outlook*, China is described as “now surrounded by nuclear states”, including “Russia, India, and Pakistan. Taiwan has long held blueprints for nuclear weapons, and should North Korea collapse and unify, there would be a substantially stronger regional rival right on China’s border”.<sup>115</sup> It is not only the government regimes that worry China. China is now worried about nuclear terrorism and the likes of Al-Qaeda showing up in the far west Xinjiang region.<sup>116</sup> According to an official at the Communist Central Party School in Beijing, “Nonproliferation is the goal, especially for the new generation of leaders like Hu Jintao. For China to try and create this image is a necessity. Nonproliferation is something not avoidable for China in this time.”<sup>117</sup> Their strategy has drastically changed to provide for the security of their nation and people. China has shown a willingness to work with the United States and other officials for the goal of nonproliferation and will continue to hash out a gradual reunification on the Korean peninsula. Their weight just might prove to be the determining factor in hashing out an agreement in the Beijing talks which will continue toward systems and models for the reunification process.

## **F. NATIONAL OPTIONS FOR CHINA**

### **1. Chinese Factors to Shape a Future Korea**

An important factor for China to consider in shaping the future Korea is to maintain equal relations with both Koreas. China has the difficult position of maintaining their close relationship with the North and their new relations with the South while avoiding favoring one over the other. Since the end of the Sino-Soviet split, the North Koreans are no longer needed to provide the support to China that it once needed during the Cold War. China has been able to enhance their relationship with South Korea and not split from North Korea. A growing economic relationship with South Korea has been developed through the years making friendly alliances a possibility even if it is just based on trade and investments. Trade with South Korea alone has reached \$30 billion and the PRC

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<sup>115</sup> Robert Marquand, "China Brings Shift on Nukes to Korea Talks," *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb 24 2004, p. 01.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

has become their largest trade partner.<sup>118</sup> Both Beijing and South Korea prefer a reunification to take place gradually and throughout a period of time in which North Korea can be kept afloat with outside investments. The Chinese government has been instrumental in keeping the North Korean economy from escaping a collapse by providing massive amounts of aid which total almost one-third of the entire Chinese developmental assistance.<sup>119</sup> South Korea has supported this aid through the Sunshine Policy as well as aid of its own. If China is to continue their success, they must have the trade relationship with South Korea and divert some money into North Korea. China will need to maintain their relations with both Koreas in order to have influence once reunification comes around.

A second factor for China's consideration is their reunification with Taiwan. China has been very cautious in becoming overly involved with reunification issues stating that they believe that it is a matter to be worked out peacefully on their own. Because of the "North Korean factor" as well as the "one China policy" in which they face their own dilemmas of a reunification, it makes influence over the Korean peninsula a sticky situation.<sup>120</sup> China has only recently, with the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, been in the forefront coaxing the DPRK back to the Six Party Talks. China fears as much as the other neighboring nations of Asia what a reunified Korea would do to them. However, their influence in the denuclearization of the peninsula echoes their desires to have Korea reunified peacefully and independently. Their hopes are that a reunified Korea is strong enough to deter the rise of Japanese power, yet weak enough economically not to take away Chinese competition.

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<sup>118</sup> Charles E. Morrison et al., *Asia Pacific Security Outlook, 2004*, (Tokyo; New York: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2004), 82.

<sup>119</sup> Mel Gurtov, "Common Security in North Korea," *Asian Survey* 42, no. 3 (May/Jun 2002): 401.

<sup>120</sup> Hakjoon Kim, "China's Korea Policy since the Tiananmen Square Incident," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 38, no. 2, *The China Challenge: American Policies in East Asia* (1991): 107.

Another security factor that remains through reunification would be the issue of refugees moving into the industrial sector of China that borders the North. Recent remarks from the PRC delineate that there is no refugee problem, however they know that any unification that is more rapid than is needed to develop the North Korean economy would bring thousands of North Koreans their way. This would cost the Chinese government money and time that will prove difficult to deal with especially since reports of malnutrition and numerous illnesses plague the North Korean people. Refugees might pose a greater problem to China since there are already multitudes of Chinese with Korean ethnicity in the Northeastern sector of China. Historically, this land did belong to the "Chosun" people when the peninsula was unified. Under a reunification, China would fear Korean nationalism claiming that land which has become a valuable industrial sector to China. The DPRK has already made the statement that they "want to have all the areas in [China's] Northeast where Kim Il-Sung fought as a guerrilla commander against the Japanese during World War II".<sup>121</sup> The flow of refugees into this land would only strengthen the cause as more Koreans would inhabit the area.

The last and main factor that would shape a Chinese policy toward Korean reunification is relations with the United States. While Chinese and American relations have been improving, both nations feel that they are in competition with one another regionally and globally. If North Korea were to collapse or be swallowed up by the South, Beijing would no longer have the security buffer in a highly militarized region that it once had.<sup>122</sup> China fears that an American military presence would stare at them across the Yalu River once North Korea is swallowed up by the South and create a security threat that would cause them in turn to build up their forces along the Chinese-Korean border.

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<sup>121</sup> Wang, "Joining the Major Powers for the Status Quo: China's Views and Policy on Korean Reunification," 181.

<sup>122</sup> Ni, "THE WORLD; China Looks Like Winner in N. Korea Talks; using its Leverage on its Reclusive Neighbor, Beijing Plays a Key Role in Bringing U.S. and Pyongyang Together to Discuss Region's Stability." A.3.

## **2. Best Case Scenario**

China's key national security objective on the Korean peninsula is to have a friendly and stable Korea on its borders. A reunified Korea should be receptive to Chinese influence and not Japanese military or economic power.<sup>123</sup> China believes that they can best serve the reunification process on the peninsula if their reunification with Taiwan has taken place first.<sup>124</sup> Therefore, under a gradual reunification of the Korean peninsula, China will have first reunified with Taiwan. The first step to this peaceful peninsula is to denuclearize the peninsula through the Six-Party Talks. North Korea's presence in the region with nuclear weapons not only threatens China, but Japan as well. As long as Japan feels threatened there is the greater possibility that they will initiate their own nuclear program in defense. This action by the Japanese would in turn threaten China again. It would be a snowball effect which would be first solved by eliminating the North Korean threat. Under this scenario, the North and South would have reunified under a very gradual process in which the North has taken on the "China model" for the economy. Using this model, China would obviously have more influence over the developing North Korean economy and the burden of raising their economy would be taken on by all nations involved. The next step prior to reunification would be to minimize the American influence with South Korea. In order to do this, a peace treaty to terminate the Korean War should be negotiated between the North and South to go along with their nonaggression agreement. This pact should also include the declaration of a neutral and nonaligned policy in the region. Based on this there would be the reduction of conventional arms by the two Koreas, the disbanding of the United Nations command, and the withdrawal of all American forces from the peninsula.<sup>125</sup> The reduction of arms on the peninsula will not only ease tension along the peninsula, but also the Asian-Pacific region. This scenario would provide the maximum

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<sup>123</sup> Gurtov, "Common Security in North Korea," 399.

<sup>124</sup> Wang, "Joining the Major Powers for the Status Quo: China's Views and Policy on Korean Reunification," 182.

<sup>125</sup> Jia Hao and Zhuang Qubing, "China's Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula," *Asian Survey* 32, no. 12 (Dec. 1992): 1154.

benefits to the Chinese as they maintain influence, end the nuclear threat, and minimize American influence along the Korean peninsula.

### **3. Worst Case Scenario**

China knows that the North and the South do not threaten them individually while they are a divided nation. They do believe that they could be threatened once Korea is reunified. It is estimated that the new Korea could become a "regional power with world-influence".<sup>126</sup> What they can do with that new power depends on what major nation will have the influence over the peninsula and whether it will be able to threaten China once they are sharing a border. In the case of a rapid reunification in which the North has collapsed or aggression by the North has taken place, American military power would be directly involved on the peninsula. The threat of the United States-Japan power having more influence and directly neighboring them makes the Chinese discourage Korean reunification. They are not able to state this outwardly based on relations with both the DPRK and the ROK; however, a reunification of the Korean peninsula does nothing but threaten the Chinese influence and security in the region if it were to share the American relations that South Korea has currently. China would rather have many smaller neighbors than have a border region that is a single large neighbor.<sup>127</sup> A South Korean domination over the North would have close ties to the West and possible U.S. forces sharing the border into China. Also, the North would have to go through economic reform which would be aided by the Japanese to promote stability in the region.<sup>128</sup> The China model would not be used and possible American military action on the peninsula might even damage China's own economic stability.<sup>129</sup> Japan and the United States would establish political and economic influence throughout the

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<sup>126</sup> Wang, "Joining the Major Powers for the Status Quo: China's Views and Policy on Korean Reunification," 181.

<sup>127</sup> Nathan and Ross, "The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress : China's Search for Security," 97.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>129</sup> Ni, "THE WORLD; China Looks Like Winner in N. Korea Talks; using its Leverage on its Reclusive Neighbor, Beijing Plays a Key Role in Bringing U.S. and Pyongyang Together to Discuss Region's Stability." A.3.

reunified peninsula. Seoul would no longer depend on China to maintain North Korean peace and security over the region and their influence would dwindle. Western and Japanese influence would remain more powerful and possibly might be able to get the new Korean nation to join in the anti-China coalition.<sup>130</sup> In the end, rapid reunification of the Korean peninsula would only bring on more security concerns with the Western influence and a loss of Chinese influence.

#### **4. Policy Approaches**

The Chinese government has shared with the rest of the major powers in outwardly supporting the Korean people in their reunification goal through peaceful measures. It is difficult for policy to be made since Korean reunification is currently unfeasible to Chinese national interests. Yet, because of their interest to reunify with Taiwan and their support for the DPRK, Beijing must continue to support the reunification goals of the two Koreas. China fears that American presence on the peninsula will continue as they increase their influence over a reunified Korea. In order for China to have more of a say in the reunification process, it must first continue to hold the multilateral Six Party Talks in Beijing.

China also must continue to persuade the North Korean government to commit to dialogue in ending the nuclear problem and promoting stability in the region. Since China is North Korea's closest ally, they will prove to have impeccable worth among the other nations as they act as an intermediary between Pyongyang and Washington.<sup>131</sup> In the event that Korea is reunified via a rapid process such as North Korean collapse, China must first try to work with Russia, Japan, and the United States to not unilaterally interfere with the inter-Korean situation. The solution would need to come out of a multilateral committee that will be comprised of all of the powers. The Six-Party Talks that have been created for the denuclearization will form the base of this committee. In the likely event of a gradual reunification, China should strive for a settlement that would include: the Korean peninsula as a nuclear free zone; a ban on

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<sup>130</sup> Roy, "China's Foreign Relations," 213.

<sup>131</sup> Hao and Qubing, "China's Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula," 1155.

military nuclear capabilities; a peace treaty; strengthening the nonaggression agreement between the North and South; phased conventional arms reduction; disbanding of the UN Command; and withdrawal of American forces.<sup>132</sup> Second, China should strive to play an active role in promoting regional economic cooperation. An example of this might include the Tumen River Project and the promotion of multilateral cooperation through dialogue. Lastly, China will try to establish multilateral agreements in the region vice the bilateral treaties that have been in place for so long. This will go a long way toward incorporating all nations in dialogue and mutual security. With multilateral treaties, third powers could no longer hold power over other nations such as Korea and Japan. They would share an alliance rather than going through the United States. Through negotiations and involvement between all of the powers involved, a unified Korea will evolve that is beneficial to China's political and strategic position within the region.

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 1154.

## **IV. CAN RUSSIA GAIN THE POWER OF COERCION?**

### **A. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

In 2005, the question of whether North Korea has nuclear weapons capabilities looms large over the minds of many leaders in Asia and the rest of the world. While the North Koreans are quick to admit that they do have nuclear weapons which they would use against an enemy in their national defense, neighbors such as Russia are still skeptical. If they were to possess such potential, then the four major powers active in the area, Japan, Russia, China, and the United States, must work with South Korea to dissolve these nuclear weapons. The ability of the North to continue a nuclear program worries all that are involved, regardless of whether they too own nuclear weapons. Until this nuclear dilemma has been solved, major powers involved in the Beijing talks will drag their feet on other Korean reunification issues. Russia, which just became a part of the Beijing based Six-Party Talks for Korean disarmament in August 2003, has been trying to use its long standing relationship with the Korean peninsula to sway North Korea to dissolve its nuclear program, and thus gain more influence in the Korean reunification process.

Russian involvement with the Korean people goes back to the nineteenth century when they were trying to bind Russia's newly acquired territory in the Far East. Tsarist Russia seized territories of East Siberia and the Far East. Through the Aigun Treaty of 1858 Russia also took the territory north of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers from China. In 1860 they also took China's Maritime Province which was in Northeastern China along the border of Korea.<sup>133</sup> It was after all of these acquisitions that Russia for the first time would share a border with Korea. In 1880, the Russian population in the Far East was less than 100,000 and far outnumbered by the neighboring Chinese, Koreans, and Tungus, who were a Siberian ethnic group living in the area between the Yenisei and Ob river basins

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<sup>133</sup> Seung-Ho Joo, "Russia and the Korean Peace Process," in *The Korean Peace Process and the Four Powers*, Tae-Hwan Kwak and Seung-Ho Joo eds. (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2003), 143.



to the Pacific Ocean.<sup>134</sup> To have Russian control of this new territory, Russia established de facto control over Manchuria. In turn, for this action, Russia needed to have a dominant position in Korea.<sup>135</sup> Thus, Russia first became involved in Korea so that foreign lands would not threaten the security of Manchuria and the Far East territories of Russia. From 1895-1904, Russia's main political aim was geo-strategic in Korea - trying to deny Japan the military advantage while also gaining the warm-water ports on the peninsula. When Japan called on Russia to withdraw its Far Eastern armies, Russia refused and Japan declared war on them, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. This would be the first modern war that would be fought over the Korean peninsula. Japan was victorious and gained the dominant position in Korea. Russia made attempts to move southward into Korea again, but they were foiled by both Britain and Japan. Therefore, it was on August 8, 1945, that the Soviet Union declared war on Japan, and on August 12<sup>th</sup>, the first Soviet troops arrived in Korea. Japan surrendered unconditionally on August 15<sup>th</sup>. The Soviet troops were already operating in the northern part of Korea while American forces were more than 1,000 miles away from landing in South Korea.<sup>136</sup> Washington believed that the Russian occupation of the North might mean the takeover of the entire peninsula. Fearing the creation of another communist nation in Asia, on August 15<sup>th</sup> the United States proposed to divide Korea along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. Not wanting to cut the Americans out of Korea and consequently be cut out of Japan, the following day Stalin consented to Washington's plan and divided Korea along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, thus creating what we know today as North and South Korea. North Korea under the heavy influence of their communist government known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would be a crucial part of the Soviet Union's outer security territory. North Korea would secure a buffer for them against potential United States, Japanese, and Chinese threats. It was important during the Cold War for the Soviet Union to maintain

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<sup>134</sup> Joo, "Russia and the Korean Peace Process," 143.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. 145.

their heavy influence over North Korea as it meant their survival in the Northeast Asian region.

## **B. KOREA'S DIVISION: HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

It can be stated that the Soviet Union was in essence the founder of the DPRK in the North. The Soviet Union's support of the North Korean state was essential in its survival. After the creation of the two Korean states in 1948, it was the Soviet Union that recognized the DPRK as "the only legitimate representative" of the Korean people.<sup>137</sup> Following World War II, it was the Soviet ideology that brought forward "The Great Leader", Premier Kim Il-Sung, to lead the North Korean people under the socialist views of Mother Russia. The Soviet Union considered Korea to be a "truly socialist state" and a "member of the world Socialist community and a bulwark against American imperialism and Japanese militarism."<sup>138</sup> Based on this relationship, the Soviet Union thought of North Korea as one of its foremost allies. The DPRK in turn was closely allied for its survival to the Soviets. There were hundreds of millions of Soviet dollars in the form of commodities and natural resources pumped into the Northern economy to keep it alive.<sup>139</sup> Committed to one another, the Soviet Union and DPRK had a bilateral treaty called the "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance" which was signed on July 6, 1961 and automatically renewed itself every five years. This treaty agreed that the Soviet Union would intervene to aid the DPRK if they were attacked by another country. As history continued forward, relations with the DPRK would slow down because of increased tensions between the Soviets and China, the DPRK's other major ally. Even though China and the Soviet Union were split, North Korea still maintained bilateral relations with each one. The DPRK commonly tried to appease both of their allies with a neutral approach, however there were many times in which they

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<sup>137</sup> Alexander Zhebin, "Russia and North Korea: An Emerging, Uneasy Partnership," *Asian Survey* 35, no. 8 (Aug. 1995): 726.

<sup>138</sup> Joo, "Russia and the Korean Peace Process," 146.

<sup>139</sup> Joseph P. Ferguson, "Perspectives on the Future of the Korean Peninsula: Russia's Role on the Korean Peninsula and Great Power Relations in Northeast Asia," *The National Bureau of Asian Research* 14, no. 1 (June 2003): 35.

did not agree with Soviet actions if they chose national interests over communist ideology. The dislocation of ideology between the Soviet Union and the DPRK was evident when Yugoslavia and Albania chose their own communist path apart from the Soviet leadership. The DPRK blamed the Soviets for letting Yugoslavia and Albania go their own way. Despite North Korea's foreign policy of Sino-Soviet neutralism, the North Koreans had problems with the Soviet Union. In 1962, bilateral relations between the two countries would be influenced by several incidents. First, Khrushchev changed the rules and demanded payment in money rather than on credit or barter, for the weapons that were being supplied to the North Koreans. The second incident took place in 1968 during the Pueblo crisis. The Soviets made it clear that they would not support aggressive North Korean actions toward the United States no matter what the first article of the 1961 Moscow-Pyongyang Treaty stated.<sup>140</sup>

The DPRK would constantly play the Russians and Chinese against one another in an attempt to gain as many concessions as possible. This diplomatic game became obvious to the Russians when they decided in the late 1980s to abandon most relations with Pyongyang. Prior to this the late Cold War Soviet and DPRK relationship could be divided into a three periods: 1980-82, 1983-89, and 1990 to August 1991.<sup>141</sup> In the first period, both the North Koreans and the Russians tried to distance themselves from one another. In North Korea, their media printed anti-Soviet articles which had been authored by Chinese leaders. However, both the Soviets and the North Koreans needed one another. North Korea desperately needed help to modernize in comparison to the ROK while the Soviets faced the possibility of an anti-Soviet alliance emerging again in Asia. Both nations needed friends in the region and turned to one another.<sup>142</sup> In the second period, both countries were active in their exchanges both politically and economically. An agreement was reached for the Soviet Union to build atomic power plants as long as North Korea joined the Non Proliferation Treaty

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<sup>140</sup> Zhebin, "Russia and North Korea: An Emerging, Uneasy Partnership," 727.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

(NPT).<sup>143</sup> For the third period, Mikhail Gorbachev had come into power and formulated a strategy of establishing relations with a growing South Korea. This would be fully realized in September 1990 when Moscow normalized relations with Seoul. Since the Soviets turned to the South, the North was forced to look somewhere other than the Soviet Union for their economic and military support.<sup>144</sup> Since the normalization of relations with South Korea, Russo-North Korean relations took a three-stage path: 1991-1995, 1995-1999, and the current years under the Putin administration.<sup>145</sup> In the first stage under the administration of Boris Yeltsin, the Russians were trying to distance themselves as much as they could from the North Korean communist allies. The policy was to basically ignore the DPRK and turn their attention to the ROK. It was recognized that China was growing more powerful in the region and could overtake the Russian influence as well as threaten demographic and economic security in the Russian Far East.<sup>146</sup> From 1992-1995, Russian "Korean policy" would be more tilted toward the ROK while economic relations were cultivated. The first stage is epitomized by the nullification of the bilateral military treaty when Russia would sell arms to "any country in the world except North Korea".<sup>147</sup> It was not until 1996 when Moscow began to pursue a balanced or equidistant "Two Koreas" policy between the DPRK and ROK. In the second stage, Russia placed emphasis on bilateral relations with their traditional allies such as India, North Korea, and the Republics formerly under Soviet control. Their policy was a balanced position between the two Koreas. The third stage is a reflection of Russia's desire for influence in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Zhebin, "Russia and North Korea: An Emerging, Uneasy Partnership," 730.

<sup>144</sup> Ferguson, "Perspectives on the Future of the Korean Peninsula: Russia's Role on the Korean Peninsula and Great Power Relations in Northeast Asia," 36.

<sup>145</sup> Seung Ham Yang, Woosang Kim, and Yongho Kim, "Russo-North Korean Relations in the 2000s," *Asian Survey* 44, no. 6 (2004): 796.

<sup>146</sup> Ferguson, "Perspectives on the Future of the Korean Peninsula: Russia's Role on the Korean Peninsula and Great Power Relations in Northeast Asia," 37.

<sup>147</sup> Yang, Kim, and Kim, "Russo-North Korean Relations in the 2000s," 796.

<sup>148</sup> Yang, Kim, and Kim, "Russo-North Korean Relations in the 2000s," 797.

Since 2000, Moscow has made efforts to re-establish friendly relations with the DPRK while still maintaining their ties to the South. The Soviet Union had made a major effort to industrialize the North Korean state prior to the end of the Cold War and into the late 1980s. Even though they had temporarily abandoned relations with North Korea, Moscow currently has a “voice in Kim Jong-il’s ear”. Their history has tied them to one another. Their influence in the Six-Party Talks has only been since August 2003, when they were invited to join at the request of the North Koreans. The Soviets plan on gaining more influence through the denuclearization in the North at the Six-Party Talks and then using it towards reunification efforts. As it stands, Russia favors a gradual process toward Korean unification. The two Koreas should “pursue a long-term peaceful coexistence before they achieve unification; South Korea or the United States should not attempt to change North Korea’s behavior or seek North Korea’s collapse; Korean unification should be achieved through peaceful means; and the two Koreas should negotiate for peaceful unification on an equal footing.”<sup>149</sup> Russia is willing to contribute to the reunification process in any way that it can, but most of the international community now only sees Russia’s future as a mediator and facilitator for peace and security with no real influence over the two Koreas. This chapter will discuss how Russia can expand their influence over the peninsula and show their power to the rest of the international community.

### **C. REUNIFICATION AS A RESULT OF WAR**

#### **1. Russia’s Reaction to Aggression**

Russians, just like the other major powers, support a gradual and peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. They do not want to see the Korean unification happen as a result of forceful means or another Korean War that would disrupt reforms that have been made in the Russian Far East and in North Korea.<sup>150</sup> In 1961, the Soviet Union held a close mutual alliance treaty with the North Koreans which promised to come to their aid if they were attacked or to support them in their unification. Russia no longer has this clause in their *Treaty*

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<sup>149</sup> Joo, "Russia and the Korean Peace Process," 154.

<sup>150</sup> Joo, "Russia and the Korean Peace Process," 163.

*of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Cooperation* which was signed and went into effect in 2000. Instead of the automatic military intervention clause which had been in the original treaty, it only contains a “mutual contact” clause which may be subject to numerous different Russian interpretations.<sup>151</sup>

Russia views actions of North Korean aggression either against South Korea or Japan desiring reunification as an act of war and defiance against the international community. In fact, many experts assert that the North Koreans have multiple scenarios which could lead the international community into the belief that the DPRK is at war with South Korea to reunify the peninsula. One scenario would be a second DPRK invasion which was similar to the one in 1950 when they came across the Demilitarized Zone to unite the Korean land. This sort of attack by the North Koreans would not be supported at all by the Russian government as well as the rest of the international community. Russia would see this offensive action by the DPRK as a security threat to their Northeastern lands. By placing their own military forces along the North Korean border, it will stem the Chinese and American forces from spilling into Russian lands.

Another scenario would include a North Korean nuclear missile landing within the South Korean or Japanese borders and taking out a large piece of infrastructure and society. This would also be met with the same type of disapproval by Russia and the rest of the world. If the North Koreans were to take part in small destabilizing campaigns rather than a highly criticized large scale war against the South, Russia would have to be very careful in their policy toward the North. In the event that the DPRK took this action, the Russian military would be wary of supporting any movement into the northern part of the peninsula. They would realistically watch the development and take a backseat regarding whatever action is taken first by the United States and Japan. Russia, while maintaining a close personal relationship with Kim Jong-il, does not want to see a war on the peninsula as it would affect their Far East region with refugees and aid that would need to be pumped into the economy after the war's

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 149.

termination. Russia has made it known to the DPRK in the first half of 2003 that if they were to cross the “red line” by going nuclear or attacking the South, it would force them to collaborate with the United States-led international sanctions.<sup>152</sup> Russia will continue its mediation and supportive approach by not taking a forward active role if there were to be a war via North Korean aggression.

While Russia has been active in denouncing North Korea for taking any action against the ROK, they have been equally in opposition to an American-led preemptive strike. Moscow was one of the few Security Council members in the United Nations which was against the United States’ preemptive actions in Iraq. Russia would be equally against any actions taken against North Korea. On a lesser scale, Russia has been active in never allowing a vote in the United Nations to come up for an economic embargo against North Korea. Even though Russia and China would more than likely veto such an action and that is why the sanction has not been brought up in the UN Security Council, Russia fears that this could lead to a war and chaos.<sup>153</sup> The only time that the Russian government has wavered with regard to imposing economic sanctions, is if the DPRK would continue with their nuclear program and not find a diplomatic conclusion. If they agreed to back the economic sanctions, Russia added that North Korea’s security would need to be guaranteed. Russia’s stance is directed at the United States’ policy of unilateral and preventive military action which is not supported in Moscow.

## **2. Options for Russia**

Russia has been decisive in its statements that they do not want to see an escalation of a conflict on the peninsula in order for it to reunify. Moscow would be the first to veto any vote in the Security Council deciding a need to take out the North Korean nuclear program and regime rather than waiting for a nuclear strike by Pyongyang. Russia has often criticized the Bush administration for their

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<sup>152</sup> Seung-Ho Joo, "Russia and the Six Party Talks," *Vantage Point* (May 20, 2004).

<sup>153</sup> Ferguson, "Perspectives on the Future of the Korean Peninsula: Russia's Role on the Korean Peninsula and Great Power Relations in Northeast Asia," 48.

hard-line stance toward the North Koreans and believes that their provocative rhetoric does nothing but worsen the situation and get on the nerves of the DPRK.<sup>154</sup> Although they fear fallout from a North Korean nuclear attack, Russia has not supported the United States in their preemptive actions against Iraq and would be less willing to support them against the North Koreans even more since it is in their backyard. Russian forces might be asked to participate in a United Nations attempt to repel the North Korean military. If the DPRK takes drastic offensive action across the DMZ, there will be no use in maintaining close relations with Kim Jong-il. Russia will use its military forces to support the United Nations led military force and in placement along their Siberian borders to control the flow of refugees. Relations with Kim Jong-il will be cut, but the regime will not be around much longer anyway for it to matter to Russian policy. It will be more beneficial for Russian influence in reunification matters if their military is involved with the United Nations' action. Politically, the Russian government will be as outspoken about any United States action that is taken outside of the United Nations as it was with Iraq. In the event of a United States attack, the Russians would react with military neutrality and not come to the aid of the North Koreans like they did in 1950.

### **3. Effects on Russia**

A unification of this type would have some drastic characteristics for the Russian people. For instance, in the event of a war there would be massive Korean and American casualties along the war torn peninsula. However, there could be Russian civilians and infrastructure in the Far East corner of Russia which can be hit by North Korean missiles as well. There would be large-scale infrastructure ruined in the South and more than likely the North would be completely devastated. Potential chemical weapons may be used against the South as well as Russian borders. Lastly, there would be an occupation of the North by the ROK or U.S. administrations which would hold influence and

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<sup>154</sup> Joo, "Russia and the Korean Peace Process," 156.



command over the new united peninsula.<sup>155</sup> This outcome would lead to the possibility of Russians coming under the direct fire of the North Koreans, while also dealing with the flow of refugees coming out of the North. Russia's economy is not as strong as other three major powers. Monetary aid and support could take a direct role in rebuilding the infrastructure of the peninsula and therefore giving the dominant position in Korea to that power which has the most money to support a new government and reunited state. This would have a great effect on Russia, along with the future occupation of troops from either China or the United States, following a war on the peninsula.

In conclusion, Russia does not want to see Korean unification achieved by forceful means since a war on the peninsula would disrupt abilities to develop in their Far East. They have a close relationship with the DPRK as well as the United States. They will not hinder a United States action to save their friends in the North. Militarily, the Russians will not be involved with another Korean War. They will, however, try to get involved with infrastructural projects once the fighting is done and a stable government has been put in place on the peninsula. While this is the most drastic of the three scenarios toward the path of reunification, Russia will not be overly burdened if this scenario were to be pursued.

#### **D. REUNIFICATION AS A RESULT OF THE DPRK'S COLLAPSE**

##### **1. Options for Russia**

Russia's policy towards the two Koreas over the past decade has been to have a neutral and somewhat equal relationship with both of them. In order to support a collapse of North Korea and then a follow on unification of the peninsula, it would be best for Russia's influence over a unified Korea to maintain this close relationship with both of the governments in case there are any remnants of the DPRK still standing. In the event that a new North Korean government has replaced the Kim regime, it will be important for Russia to step in and aid the new leadership in the international community. Both China and the

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<sup>155</sup> "A Blueprint for U.S. Policy Toward a Unified Korea," in CSIS International Security Program [database online]. Washington, D.C. August 2002 [cited 2005]. Available from <http://www.csis.org>

United States will be vying for their alliance, however, Russia can act as a third party which is more neutral towards the two superpowers and receive North Korea's trust. Russia's role as a third party depends on the presence of North Korean leadership rather than Chinese or American forces stepping in to fill a power vacuum. It is believed that once the North collapses, all sides would scramble for advantage over the others. Russia will not remain a silent neighbor while all of this occurs.<sup>156</sup> This would of course only be one option that they could take.

Even though Russia does not have the vast amount of funds that the other major powers have available, they should give aid and invest in the new Korean state once it has collapsed. Russia will be able to link their railways to the Korean peninsula in their "iron silk road" project.<sup>157</sup> This project will have an impact on a post-collapse Korean society which needs to be built up quickly. The "iron silk road" will make the transportation of goods between Asia and Europe cheaper and faster and therefore reducing shipping costs. With the reduction in costs, Russia and Europe will be able to increase their trade with Korea and modernize and invest in the peninsula along the way. Russia's support of Korea's economy would diminish the role of Japan on the peninsula. Russian security could be threatened by a unified Korea that is powerfully influenced by Japan. A military arms race in Asia would also threaten the security of the Russian Far East border. Besides Japanese influence, Russia does not want to see Chinese superiority as the predominant factor over the peninsula. Russia would gain influence over a unified Korea as they support the new Korean state as a neutral and objective power which formerly had sway with the North as well as the South.

## **2. Effects on Russia**

Russia would suffer minimally from a North Korean governmental or economic collapse. First and foremost, there would be massive numbers of

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<sup>156</sup> Nikolai Sokov, "A Russian View of the Future Korean Peninsula," in *The Future of North Korea*, Tsuneo Akaha ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 136.

<sup>157</sup> Joo, "Russia and the Korean Peace Process," 161.

refugees crossing the border into the Russian Far East. Domestic problems would result as Russia integrated masses of people who have little to no money, varying skills, and most likely problematic health issues including malnourishment. In 2003, Russia conducted an enormous military exercise in the Far East in which its main feature was to accept up to 100,000 North Korean refugees who might cross the border.<sup>158</sup> This issue is extremely important to the Russians, as it is with the Chinese. Flooding the Russian Far East with the North Koreans will cause more domestic instability in Russia, something that they would rather not have in their current situation.

In the end, Russia fears that an economic collapse would bring in money and influence from China, Japan, and the United States. Because of their geo-strategic importance, Russia does not want to see China or Japan take a more dominant role on the peninsula. "Russia will continue to have a strategic interest in the Korean peninsula, because it is a possible base for attack and because it shares with Japan control of the Tsushima Strait and coastline of the East Sea (Sea of Japan). Thus they will endeavor to minimize Chinese or Japanese influence over Korea."<sup>159</sup> The presence of the United States military forces on the peninsula no longer threatens the Russian nation. In fact, Russia would be wary of predominant Chinese power on the peninsula forcing out the American troops prior to the complete stabilization of the peninsula. Based on relations between Russia and the United States at the time, Russia could be against the American military presence and a strong U.S.-Korean alliance once the peninsula is stable. Having a unified Korea with a strong American ally could mean a "forward military base on Russia's doorstep" and an "Asian version of NATO's eastward expansion".<sup>160</sup> Russia maintains that it supports reunification on the terms of the Korean people; however they are not in favor of a reunification unaccommodating of Russia's interests. In particular, a dominant position by China or Japan on the Korean peninsula would be very unfavorable

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<sup>158</sup> Seung-Ho Joo, "Russia and the Six Party Talks," *Vantage Point* (May 20, 2004).

<sup>159</sup> Joo, "Russia and the Korean Peace Process," 163.

<sup>160</sup> Joo, "Russia and the Korean Peace Process," 164.

to the Russian government. In the end, a unified Korea could potentially serve as a counterbalance to a potential threat from Japan or the Chinese.

## **E. REUNIFICATION AS A RESULT OF INTER-KOREAN OR MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY**

### **1. Options for Russia**

Russia is likely to try and play a greater role in a unified Korea if the two Koreas were left to decide their own fate and peacefully integrate through gradual diplomacy. It is possible that, as a part of a gradual and diplomatic resolution of reunification, United States troops might be removed from the Korean peninsula. While American forces have already been mandated to slowly decrease their numbers on the peninsula, Chinese influence could result in the complete removal. American forces on the peninsula have acted in the past as a check to an expansion of the Japanese military. Once this check has disappeared, a unified Korea might see the need to align with another nation in the region for their security while they rebuild their economy and infrastructure. Since both North and South Korea have strong alliances with China and the United States, seeking Russia's help can be seen as a compromise to both parties. Russia should use this opportunity to align with Korea and provide the military security and a nuclear umbrella while the unified Korea develops. Whether Russia will be able to militarily support the Korean nation against a strong Japanese threat is a deeper question, however, they could support the peninsula with troops that would otherwise be placed along the border to aid refugees. Prior to unification, Russia should replace the American forces located on the Korean peninsula. Neutral Russian troops will provide a domestic peaceful structure and an external security force while not threatening either of the Korean states.<sup>161</sup>

Another way that Russia may play a greater role in a unified Korea would be for the major superpowers to turn the peninsula into a neutral state and therefore eliminate any conflict between them.<sup>162</sup> By turning the Korean

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<sup>161</sup> Joo, "Russia and the Korean Peace Process," 159.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 166.

peninsula into a neutral state, Russia would play a greater role economically and politically in the Asian region as it helps a unified Korea preserve its independence and territorial integrity. Even though Korean neutrality would be viewed as an interim solution, it would help Russia to achieve many goals. First, potential security threats to the Far East and their sea routes would decrease since a neutral state would have an extremely minor chance of stationing troops from one of the major powers on the peninsula. Second, a neutral Korea would have little reason to pursue a nuclear status since it would have no real enemies to fight against. Third, a neutral Korea would mean more spent on the economy and social programs and less on defense. Finally, Russia would be able to fight internationally as one of the sponsors of Korea's neutrality.<sup>163</sup> Since Russia currently has a relationship with both North and South Korea, they are more likely to play a role in a neutral state than one that favors China or the United States.

Russia sees economic opportunities from both North and South Korea. They hope to link a trans-Siberian railroad through the Korean peninsula to open the markets of Europe and Asia to one another. Russia wishes to have a role in the infrastructure that would link Russian resources into both North and South Korea.<sup>164</sup> Russia has already assisted in building North Korean plants and industrial facilities in the past. Now that they need to be updated and overhauled, it is only logical that the Russians renew the systems that they have built. Another multilateral project that Russia could be in the forefront of is the Siberian gas development plan. Upon completion, the gas fields will provide a projected 20 million tons of natural gas to China, Russia, and Korea. The pipeline's construction will be instrumental in reducing natural gas prices to Korea by 22-25 percent.<sup>165</sup> The rising need for gas and oil in the Asian region will make Russia a desired partner. Projects like the Irkutsk gas program and the railroad program will lead to Russia's greater influence in the unified Korea.

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<sup>163</sup> Sokov, "A Russian View of the Future Korean Peninsula," 140.

<sup>164</sup> Dick K. Nanto and Emma Chanlett-Avery, *The North Korean Economy: Background and Policy Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2005), 50.

<sup>165</sup> Joo, "Russia and the Korean Peace Process," 162.

## **2. Effects on Russia**

Through the gradual reunification process Russia understands that their economy could well be turned around as they take a more active economic and political role in the future unified Korea. A number of understandings were reached in order to reactivate economic bilateral cooperation between Russia and the DPRK. They include the following: revitalization of ties between Russian organizations and North Korean industries that were built under Soviet assistance; joint development of magnetite and coal deposits; resumption of cargo shipment lines; construction of the gas pipeline; repayment of the DPRK's debts to the Soviets; the establishment of joint ventures; and modernization of Soviet-built enterprises in South Korea.<sup>166</sup> All of these agreements could increase their influence over the peninsula as well as benefit the Russian economy.

Russia wants to resume more of an active role as a mediator between the two Koreas as they hold summits on the issue of reunification. They are wary of North Korea's attempt to hold bilateral talks with Washington. If talks with Pyongyang were to result in a peace treaty with Washington, then Russia will have lost their influence. If American interests were to dominate, Russia would be in danger of having their interests ignored. Russian diplomats have stressed that American interests do not necessarily correlate to Moscow's, a reason why they need to maintain some sort of influence at least over North Korea.<sup>167</sup> Russians will need to exert their influence over both of the Korean states to secure their position over a future reunified Korea.

## **F. NATIONAL OPTIONS FOR RUSSIA**

### **1. Russian Factors to Shape a Future Korea**

North and South Korea have many factors which will shape how Russia looks at and applies policy toward their eventual unification. Russia, like most of the other nations, sees an agreement on military nuclear disarmament of North

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<sup>166</sup> Evgeniy P. Bazhanov, "Russia's Policies Toward the Two Koreas," in *The Two Koreas and the United States*, Wonmo Dong ed. (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 163.

<sup>167</sup> Bazhanov, "Russia's Policies Toward the Two Koreas," 159.

Korea as one of the most important factors before there can be a unification. After proposing multilateral collaboration and talks since 1997 to disentangle the nuclear problem on the peninsula, Russia was first invited into the Six-Party Talks in August 2003.<sup>168</sup> It was because of the United States' entanglement in Iraq and North Korea's insistence that they would provide a more fair and neutral outlook that Russia was brought to the table. Despite this close relationship with Kim Jong-il, Russia still sends out clear messages that if the DPRK were to cross the "red line" by going nuclear, it would be "unacceptable" and would force Russia to collaborate with United States-led international sanctions or even a military attack.<sup>169</sup> Russia along with China is still indecisive as to whether North Korea actually possesses reprocessed plutonium weapons. However, they are fighting for the right for the DPRK to use their nuclear reactors for energy.<sup>170</sup> This is a problem since the United States does not trust North Korean officials after International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors were kicked out and weapons were produced in what was supposed to be civilian energy producing reactors.

Another factor which will shape unification is an occupation of the peninsula by one of the major powers. Any power that threatens the security of Far Eastern Russia will undermine whatever advantages could come about from a unified Korea. The balance of power could be shifted if China were to take control over the peninsula and move the American forces out of the way. On the other hand, if Washington were to have control over the unified Korea, China would be wary of an American presence along their border. This would result in a security threat to China and a build-up of their military along the Korean border. Russia would be affected by the increase in tensions. Two remaining factors are also the flow of refugees across the Russian border and the economic potential that relations with a unified Korea will have for Russia. All of these factors must

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<sup>168</sup> Seung-Ho Joo, "Russia and the Six Party Talks," *Vantage Point* (May 20, 2004).

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Gordon Fairclough, "Koreas' Warming Ties Complicate Nuclear Equation," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug 16 2005, p. A.15.

be considered carefully by the Russian government prior to adopting a policy which should be taken.

## **2. Best Case Scenario**

In terms of unification, the best case scenario for Russia would be to unify under a “neutral Korea” approach. Russian foreign policy states that “the situation on the Korean peninsula gives rise to the greatest concern. Russia’s efforts will be concentrated on ensuring our country’s full and equal participation in efforts to settle the Korean problem and on maintaining balanced relations with both Korean states.”<sup>171</sup> The society could be a “limited” open society in which it is not under Chinese, United States, or Japanese influence. It would establish free markets in this “limited” open society as well as a liberal democracy. Russians should continue in their economic ventures on the peninsula by creating a free trade union which will include the entire Northeast Asian region.<sup>172</sup> By linking the railroads and transport networks from Korea’s Pacific ports to Russia, Korean markets would open up to Europe and Russia.<sup>173</sup> This would establish Russia and not the other major powers as having the economic advantage over the peninsula. Also in this scenario, Russia should establish close political coordination in international forums with Korea without exchanging any mutual defense commitments. If no mutual defense commitments were established, then there would be no allies or enemies among the other major powers. Beijing and Washington could not establish a hold over the peninsula. Lastly, Russia would serve as the mediator for the influences of the United States, China, and Japan in Northeast Asia.

Due to their geographic proximity, Russia cannot be passive and disinterested in the unification of the peninsula despite its domestic and internal problems. The desire for stability and economic development throughout the

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<sup>171</sup> Samuel S. Kim, “China, Japan, and Russia in Inter-Korean Relations,” in *Korea Briefing 2000-2001* (New York: Asia Society, 2002), 141.

<sup>172</sup> “A Blueprint for U.S. Policy Toward a Unified Korea,” in CSIS International Security Program [database online]. Washington, D.C. August 2002 [cited 2005]. Available from <http://www.csis.org>

<sup>173</sup> Kim, “China, Japan, and Russia in Inter-Korean Relations,” 146.



peninsula gives Russia an incentive to be a part of the unification process. The best case in which they can be a major part of this unification process is if the two Korean states were to become a unified neutral nation and use their friendship with Russia to deal with the other major powers in the Northeast Asian region.

### **3. Worst Case Scenario**

The worst case reunification scenario for the Russian nation would be if the two Koreas were to unify under a strong military. The emergence of a unified 70 million man Korea with nuclear and chemical weapons within close proximity, threatens the security of Russia. This dangerous reunification would pit the neighbors against one another as they tried to destabilize the region. Russian influence over the Korean nation in this scenario with regards to a militarized Korea would be minimal. They would also feel a security threat to their borders as China, the United States, and Japan tried to deal with a Korean military threat. A reunified Korea with a strong military would mean that United States or China might eventually have to take control of the Korean peninsula through either military or diplomatic means such as the United Nations. This military reaction might bring the people of Korea under another strong power which could directly threaten the bordering Russian Far East's security. The development of economic projects would be under the scrutiny and control of either China or the United States. Under this scenario, one of the other major powers would exert their influence and push Russia farther out of the Korean peninsula both on economic and diplomatic terms.

### **4. Policy Approaches**

Russia has two extreme scenarios which it should consider before making any policy in regards to Korean reunification. The best case scenario as discussed previously would likely put them as the most influential partner to a reunified Korea. Their authority could be more powerful than that of China or the United States and Japan. On the other hand, if the worst case scenario were to become a reality, not only would Russia suffer from a security threat directly along their border, but the more powerful and expansive militaries such as China

and the United States would have more control and say over the peninsula since it would become a military operation.

Despite these one sided scenarios it is more likely that a reunified Korea will align with a dominant power, either China or the United States. It will be better for Russia if there was a balance between the two powers on the peninsula. To gain the maximum amount of leverage with China and the United States on the peninsula, Russia will have to continue to support both North and South Korea in their equidistant policy to resume its “great-power role” regarding the peninsula. By doing this for the North and the South Koreans, Russia will gain leverage and influence on the peninsula by acting as a friend and confidant to both sides. This is an obvious advantage over the United States which has no relationship with the North Korean government or any dealings with their economy. Russia must continue to let the North Koreans know of Russia’s position if they were to test a nuclear weapon as well as their position toward the United States of any possible economic sanctions that could come as a result of United Nations direct action.

Despite the claims by other nations that the North Koreans have the nuclear capabilities because of borrowed Russian technology, Russia might take the lead in cleaning up the nuclear program by volunteering their nuclear scientists to inspect and “clean up” DPRK facilities. Because Russian scientists already know the Korean equipment, Russia should try to cut a deal where their scientists will go into the North before UN inspectors do. They can stand before the world and testify as a third party about the actual status of the nuclear program. This action will go a long way toward gaining sway over the peninsula once reunification takes place.

Russia’s objectives along the Korean peninsula are the following: maintaining stability on the peninsula; maintaining balanced relations between the two Korean states; helping with the inter-Korean dialogue; cooperating with the other big powers; and opposing domination of the peninsula by outside

forces.<sup>174</sup> Russia should continue their position in Six-Party Talks as a moderator and friend to all sides of the table. They also should take a more active role in the Korean economy by bringing in their European Economic Union ties to the peninsula while also building up railroad and oil relationships. Because of Russian involvement with Europe, the EEU can give North Korea access to additional humanitarian and economic assistance.<sup>175</sup> By doing all of these actions as well as supporting the transformation of the peninsula into a nuclear weapons free zone and backing it by a guarantee of nuclear security over a unified Korea, Russia will guarantee that they have a diplomatic place on the peninsula after reunification takes place. Will Russia regain the power of coercion that they once had during the Cold War? They probably will never have the same influence over a reunified Korea that they once had over the DPRK. However, through these actions they will become a part of an international group that can sway and influence the Korean peninsula toward prosperity.

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<sup>174</sup> Bazhanov, "Russia's Policies Toward the Two Koreas," 165.

<sup>175</sup> Kenneth Quinones, "Pyongyang and Moscow - Marriage of Convenience," Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies Conference on Russia and the Russian Far East: Transnational Security and Regional Cooperation (December 2-4, 2003), Honolulu, Hawaii.

## **V. WILL THE UNITED STATES HOLD INFLUENCE OVER A REUNIFIED KOREA**

### **A. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

American foreign policy towards North Korea began, in a sense, even before the division between the South and the North. It is the history of American foreign policy that some could argue, led to the eventual division and the creation of two Korean states. When the Japanese were allowed to claim Korea as their “colony”, the United States stepped back and let Japan, which they viewed as an equal at that time, imperialize the peninsula as long as they would not grab any new colonies.<sup>176</sup> It was not until 1943, that discussions were made to free the Korean people. The three big powers (United States, England, and China) met at the Cairo Conference and determined that Korea’s suppression by the Japanese would end and “in due course, Korea shall become free and independent”.<sup>177</sup> The wording of “in due course” was created by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt who thought that Asian countries needed time to mature before they could be independent. He suggested to Stalin that after forty years Koreans should be able to rule themselves.

Soviet forces were quick to send troops to Manchuria and northern Korea once they declared war on Japan. Washington realized that Russian occupation of Korea would have severe military consequences for the future of Asia.<sup>178</sup> Therefore, once the Soviets were present on the peninsula and it was obvious that the Japanese would surrender, the United States suggested that they divide the peninsula temporarily at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. The decision had been made in haste and without the help of any Korea experts. Washington had no clue that they had just divided the peninsula into the same spheres of influence that

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<sup>176</sup> John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer, and Albert M. Craig, ed. *East Asia Tradition and Transformation*, (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), 694.

<sup>177</sup> Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas : A Contemporary History*, (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 7.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Russians and Japanese had discussed earlier in the century.<sup>179</sup> The Soviet Union would accept the surrender of the Japanese forces in the north and the United States would accept the surrender in the south. While the Russians aimed at developing a communist state in the North, the United States aimed at the growth of an independent nation, yet made no preparations to even temporarily take over South Korea.<sup>180</sup> Trying to work out an agreement with the Soviet Union to unite the two halves, the United States agreed to administer the country together for five years through a joint commission. Distrust and accusations led the two sides to get nothing accomplished during the first two meetings of the joint commission in 1946 and 1947.<sup>181</sup> The United States, afraid of the South falling into communist hands, looked to the United Nations to solve their problems. In November, 1947, the United Nations passed a resolution that would call for free elections in the part of Korea controlled by the UN, the withdrawal of all foreign troops, and the formation of a UN commission to oversee Korea. The Soviet Union, frustrated with the results, boycotted the vote on the resolution. On May 10, 1948 the “free” elections in the south elected Syngman Rhee, a United States backed anti-communist president. On September 9, 1948, in response to the south’s declaration, the People’s Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) was declared under the leadership of Kim Il-Sung, the new prime minister.<sup>182</sup> Only three years following the liberation of the Korean peninsula from the Japanese, there were two separate states with two separate political systems and divided by a line guarded by military forces.

## **B. HISTORY AFTER KOREA’S DIVISION**

The DPRK served as a constant threat to the United States’ interests as it was led by a communist regime and heavily backed by the Soviet Union. American foreign policy changed over the next sixty years as Washington related to the North Korean government. Following World War II, the United States was

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<sup>179</sup> Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas : A Contemporary History*, 6.

<sup>180</sup> Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig, "East Asia Tradition and Transformation," 914.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 915.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 915.

more interested in containing Russian power and the spread of communism than in developing and reunifying Korea. Secretary of State George C. Marshall advocated his plan to extend financial assistance in order to repeal communism to the rest of war-torn Europe. Over the four years of the Marshall Plan, the U.S. gave approximately 13.3 billion dollars to contain communism, however, none of that money was given to Asia. Korea, which faced the biggest threat directly to their north, should have evoked fear in Washington of communism controlling the peninsula.<sup>183</sup> However, even with Russian influence in North Korea, the United States still did not include Korea in part of the Marshall Plan. Washington was not worried about North Korea and Americans' Far East Asia policy displayed their lack of concern.

The United States was unquestionably not prepared for the North Korean attack across the thirty-eighth parallel into South Korea. Amassing only limited troops in South Korea, the American military was quickly run over from the northern invasion. Based on historical accounts, Washington had two different expectations of the Soviet Union at this time. First off, Washington thought there was no immediate danger of an attack in North Korea because the Soviets were to use their forces somewhere else in the world to promote Communism.<sup>184</sup> This, of course, was based on U.S. thought that Korea was much too small of a prize for the Soviet Union to be concerned with. The second expectation of the Soviets was that they would not engage in obvious aggression because it would result in a total war with the United States.<sup>185</sup> Because American strategists could not foresee a reason based on their expectations to employ American forces in defense of South Korea, they were unprepared for what would happen on June 25, 1950. Korea was simply not viewed as a place of strategic importance and U.S. leaders did not believe that the DPRK would act on its own and not on behalf of Soviet foreign policy. If South Korea were under attack,

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<sup>183</sup> Alexander George, "American Policy-Making and the North Korean Aggression," *World Politics* 7, no. 2 (January 1955).

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

Washington believed before June 25, 1950 that the matter would be handled by the United Nations. Secretary of State Acheson made this known in a major policy speech titled "Crisis in China-An Examination of United States Policy" in January of 1950. In it he echoed the statement that any attack on South Korea would be met with United Nations action.<sup>186</sup> However, the United States reacted quickly to the North Korean aggression as they changed their policy overnight and deployed troops to a part of the world which had been previously considered outside their defensive perimeter.

The North Korean invasion into South Korea on June 25, 1950 was a pinnacle event that changed American foreign policy. Washington knew the implications that this action would have in the Cold War and knew that they should act. American forces were initially to be used to suppress the extension of Communism in the South. However, when the tides of war changed and General MacArthur and his forces chased the North Koreans into the north, Chinese soldiers would come to the aid of the North Koreans. The UN forces would be pushed back and made to give way to a standoff once again at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. An armistice would eventually be drafted in 1953 which would halt the war but not end it. The United States and South Korea signed a mutual defense treaty on October 1, 1953, declaring that American troops would remain in place in South Korea. The treaty agreed that the parties will "maintain and develop appropriate means to deter armed attack and will take suitable measures in consultation and agreement to implement this Treaty."<sup>187</sup> With this treaty, a special security relationship between the United States and the ROK had been made.

The United States' relationship with Korea is dichotomous since it has had a diminished relationship with the North while maintaining a "special" relationship with the South. The South Korean government has had in place for many years

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<sup>186</sup> Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton, Inc., 1969), 355.

<sup>187</sup> *Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea*, (October 1, 1953).

the “Sunshine Policy”, first introduced by President Kim Dae Jung, which it believes will help the two halves of the nation to unite in the future.<sup>188</sup> In order to maintain this special balance and relationship with the South Koreans, Washington considered softening its approach and respecting the Sunshine Policy. The three guiding principles of the Sunshine Policy were the following: No armed provocation by the north was to be tolerated; the south will not attempt to absorb the North; and the South seeks cooperation with the North.<sup>189</sup> The Policy believes that there can be political and economic relationships between the United States and Japan with the North Koreans. It has several policy guidelines: an inter-Korean dialogue will be upheld; South Korea will provide 3.2 billion dollars to construct two light-water reactors; politics and business will be separated so that the limits of South Korean investment will be waived; humanitarian aid will be provided to the North; and family reunions are encouraged.<sup>190</sup> Based on this policy and in order to keep good relations with the South Korean government, the American policy under President Clinton needed to take a more engaging position as well. Based on this change in policy, the Clinton administration drafted and agreed on the Agreed Framework of 1994.

Under the stipulations of the 1994 Agreed Framework, the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO) was founded with Japan, South Korea, and other European Union nations joining in. The Agreement stated that the North Koreans were to completely abandon their nuclear weapons program. Old reactors were to be shut down and dismantled. Spent fuel rods were to be contained and removed from North Korea and sent elsewhere where it would be supervised as part of the North Korean compliance. North Korea also was engaged in dialogue with the South and implemented the 1991 North-South denuclearization declaration. Last but not least, the North was to fully comply with IAEA standards and let inspectors into their state to examine their

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<sup>188</sup> Larry A. Niksch, *Korea: U.S.-Korean Relations - Issues for Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, February 22, 2005), Available from CRS Web.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.



program.<sup>191</sup> The United States also had obligations under this Framework. Washington was to found KEDO, build two new light water reactors -- of which the first one was to be done by 2003, provide 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil per year until the reactors are finished, and provide a formal assurance of security against a military or nuclear threat.<sup>192</sup> This Agreement was meant to be the answer to all of the U.S-DPRK problems that had faced them prior to making this accord. Since KEDO was formed and the United States and their allies began to conform to the Agreement, there was approximately 1.3 billion dollars spent. Before the second reactor has been entirely built, the North Koreans were to be in full compliance of the IAEA standards. According to U.S. Ambassador Charles Pritchard, KEDO was on course to provide the North Koreans with a significant portion of the reactor project by 2005, and with full cooperation by Pyongyang the IAEA would have been able to verify the completeness of the termination of their nuclear program within 3-4 years.<sup>193</sup>

Since the 1990s the United States' foreign policy towards North Korea has mainly consisted of two developments: a response to North Korea's nuclear weapons program and massive food shortages. In 1995 the U.S. officially began giving assistance to North Korea through energy assistance in KEDO, food aid, and a small amount of medical supplies.<sup>194</sup> Energy assistance was arranged under the Agreed Framework of 1994. After KEDO had been formed, Washington financed two light water reactors and heavy fuel oil was to be sent to North Korea. Since North Korea's admittance of their nuclear weapons program, energy assistance has been terminated. The other major portion of assistance from the United States comes in the form of food and medical aid. In the 1990s there were massive food shortages in the North that led to millions of deaths. It

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<sup>191</sup> *Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, (October 21, 1994).

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Charles H. Pritchard, "Public Statement by Ambassador Charles H. Pritchard," *KEDO General Conference* (May 23, 2002).

<sup>194</sup> Mark E. Manyin and Ryun Jun, *U.S. Assistance to North Korea* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2003), Available from CRS Web.

was estimated that food shortages and lack of proper medical care led to the death of between five and ten percent of the North's population.<sup>195</sup> Food aid has been primarily given to the United Nations World Food Program (WFP). It is speculated that food that is directly given to the DPRK government will be given to the elite Koreans and military, not the poor who truly need it. The United States has sent assistance worth over \$600 million.<sup>196</sup> North Korea has regulated the international relief agency's operation in the country and uses the food as they deem needed.

Since the inception of the Beijing talks to discuss the North Korean nuclear program, Pyongyang admitted to a U.S. diplomat that they possessed nuclear weapons and they were close to reprocessing the spent fuel rods to produce five or six nuclear weapons. Washington fears that North Korea will "prove" through a physical demonstration the extent of their nuclear capabilities.<sup>197</sup> There has yet to be such a demonstration, however, the Beijing Six Party Talks have not reached an agreement. Washington stands firm that North Korea needs to completely dismantle their nuclear program before they can resume reunification goals. How Washington will help North and South Korea along their reunification path will also determine their authority once they are a united Korea. The United States needs to be prepared for Korean reunification however it may occur, so that it can be a major influence on the entire Korean peninsula.

### **C. REUNIFICATION AS A RESULT OF WAR**

#### **1. Options for the United States**

Washington has stated many times over the years since the end of the 1994 Agreement that it would like to resolve the nuclear program on the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner. Yet, Washington is clear that the use of military

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<sup>195</sup> Mark E. Manyin and Ryun Jun, *U.S. Assistance to North Korea* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2003), Available from CRS Web.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> Jim Forney et al., "Done Talking? it Looks Increasingly Unlikely that the North Korean Nuclear Crisis Will be Solved through the Six-Party Talks. So what Will the U.S. do Now?" *Time International* 165, no. 18 (May 9 2005): 23.

action to end the nuclear threat in North Korea is never off of the table. While both sides stand firm in blaming the other for the standstill in the Six Party Talks, it is possible that war is the only option that each one can foresee. In Washington's case, the Bush administration has taken their preemption policy to the forefront by invading Iraq and getting rid of Saddam Hussein and his government. North Korea was listed with Iraq as one of the "Axis of Evil" nations. Of course it would be logical for Kim Jong-il to believe that they would be next. While international support for the invasion of Iraq continues to decrease as American troops are still deployed in Iraq to control the peace, an invasion of North Korea may be even less supported. Washington would rely heavily on intelligence that North Korea would use their nuclear weapons against South Korea, Japan, or even the United States, since it is assumed that North Korean weapons might be able to hit the islands of Hawaii. More importantly, the threat is greater that North Korea will sell their nuclear fissile materials and weapons. North Korea's economic decline coinciding with catastrophic floods could threaten the Kim regime if dissatisfied elites wanted change. While North Korea is currently trying to extort aid from the international community, "carrots" in exchange for his nuclear program, if all else fails, it is possible that the DPRK could resort to selling their nuclear material on the black market.<sup>198</sup> The United States has recognized that there are several potential buyers if North Korea were to sell their weapons. Obvious buyers of the materials other than Al Queda would include Egypt, Iran, Syria, and Yemen which have all had arms transfers with the North Koreans in the past. Other less obvious states could also be Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, and Venezuela.<sup>199</sup> In any of these cases, if a nuclear weapon or nuclear fissile material would get into these states' hands, the effects could be more unacceptable to the United States than the repercussions of a pre-emptive attack on North Korea. Only in the case of North Korea taking their nuclear program to the black market would Washington risk the retort by the

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<sup>198</sup> Andrew J. Coe, "North Korea's New Cash Crop," *The Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 75.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

international community's critical retort that the United States is fighting another "groundless" war.

It is more likely though that if the DPRK's leaders feel that their regime is in jeopardy, they will scramble to hold onto their power. Possible reasons for North Korea to act in this manner are: a fear of being attacked by the United States in a preemptive action, an imminent collapse, or a last ditch effort to reunify when it appeared that there was no other hope for peaceful reunification. They can use the Vietnamese unification as their model since North Vietnam forcefully absorbed South Vietnam when it was apparent that it would not reunify peacefully under two hostile political systems.<sup>200</sup> If North Korea were to take this aggressive action, they have their antiquated but numerous conventional forces, to lash out over the DMZ and try to reunite the peninsula on their terms. They can send missiles to both Japan and South Korea. More than likely China and Russia would be safe from North Korean weapons. Pyongyang would lash out at the United States and its alliances. Under this scenario, the United States would support its bilateral treaty with South Korea and defend that state. The United Nations might be used if a resolution were to be passed, however both China and Russia could serve to veto the action in the UN Security Council if it were to be brought up. Therefore, the United States military will defend the South Koreans while also pushing Kim Jong-il out of control. Japan would support the American forces from far away. They will need to be careful not to place Japanese military on the Korean peninsula before historical relations have been resolved. If this were to occur before the end of the Iraqi occupation, Washington will need to redeploy thousands of troops onto the peninsula and create a long term plan until the North has been controlled and the reunification progress is under way on peaceful terms.

## **2. Effects on the United States**

The effects on the United States would be similar if an aggressive action were taken by the North Koreans or the United States preemptively acted in that

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<sup>200</sup> Ming Liu, "An Obsessed Task: Prospects, Models, and Impact of Korean Reunification," *East Asia : An International Quarterly* 17, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 30-55.

American forces would be shifted toward the Korean peninsula for another long term occupation. Once the DPRK realizes that they will be dissolved by the American and South Korean military, they might take action to either detonate a nuclear weapon toward one of their enemies or sell the information on the black market. The United States will want immediate accountability of the nuclear equipment and all of the plutonium rods. The direct access by the military and technical inspectors will present Seoul with diplomatic and alliance challenges right away.<sup>201</sup> In either case Washington would be very worried about the long term effects of a nuclear weapon from North Korea. If the United States has gone in on its own without aggressive provocation from North Korea and without approval from the United Nations, which will not happen while Russia and China are able to veto action by Washington, then Washington will again suffer the dire consequences of the international community perceiving it as being a “cowboy” and going it alone. Even South Korea has stated that they would not support American action against Pyongyang if it has been initiated preemptively.<sup>202</sup>

The effects of a war on the peninsula would most likely mean tens of thousands of casualties and devastating consequences to the peninsula’s infrastructure. Aid and investments by NGOs which normally have gone to rebuilding the economy and helping the North Korean people to recover from famine and health issues now would be needed to pump into the war efforts to stop the Kim Jong-il regime from using a nuclear weapon. This would play a role in Washington’s defense spending as more troops would need to be sent over a period of time until the peninsula has been reunified under peaceful terms. The last important effect from American troops being on the peninsula and marching up through North Korea is the China threat. China has been benefiting from the Korean division for the past sixty years as North Korea has served as a buffer from the democratic state of South Korea and its American influence. Once a

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<sup>201</sup> Charles L. Pritchard, "Korean Reunification: Implications for the United States and Northeast Asia," *Uri Party Foundation - International Symposium on Peace and Prosperity in Northeast Asia* (2005): 6.

<sup>202</sup> Gordon Fairclough, "U.S. And Seoul Debate Pyongyang's Next Step," *Wall Street Journal*, April 19, 2005, p. 4.

war has begun and the American troops have taken control of the North Korean state, there will no longer be that buffer. Depending on relations at the time between Beijing and Washington, there might be heightened tensions along that border. The war and impending unification of Korea might threaten China's security to the point that there is no longer a balance in the Asian region.

#### **D. REUNIFICATION AS A RESULT OF THE DPRK'S COLLAPSE**

##### **1. Options for the United States**

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, it was suspected among political elites around the world that North Korea would fall in the same way. In South Korea, the eventual collapse even led President Roh Tae Woo to order nine governmental bodies to prepare plans for managing the absorption of the North.<sup>203</sup> Despite this widely held assumption in the 1990s, the Pyongyang regime has been able to survive past famine and floods to maintain their position of leadership in the North Korean state. As discussed in Chapter one, the triggering event for a governmental collapse could either come as mass disorder from the people "crumbling from below", or there could be a elite coup, "crumbling from above".<sup>204</sup> Either one of these triggering events will need external intervention by either a joint U.S.-ROK alliance or a multinational force under the UN.<sup>205</sup> Washington should stress that they would work under the hat of a United Nations multinational force if a collapse were to occur. If this path were executed by the United States, it would appear to the North and South Koreans that Americans, under the UN flag are not occupying the peninsula to impose their will on the new unified government. The United States has experienced decreasing popularity among the South Korean government and their population since the Bush administration has taken office in Washington.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Liu, "An Obsessed Task: Prospects, Models, and Impact of Korean Reunification," 30-55.

<sup>204</sup> "A Blueprint for U.S. Policy Toward a Unified Korea," in CSIS International Security Program [database online]. Washington, D.C. August 2002 [cited 2005]. Available from <http://www.csis.org>

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Gordon Fairclough, "Koreas' Warming Ties Complicate Nuclear Equation," *Wall Street Journal*, August 16, 2005, p. 15.

South Korea has been divided over how Washington has been dealing with North Korea. If the United States were to come onto the peninsula to aid in the collapse in the North, regardless of our history together with the Korean War, it would not be embraced as readily as if a multinational force under the UN flag were to be used.

Another problem that the United States and the possible UN multinational force will have to face is integration of socioeconomic and political problems. All of the problems that will be encountered are ones that will be dealt with under the scenario of a war, however, even with a collapse of their political power the North Koreans might not have been completely distinguished. Therefore, policies for intervening in the collapsed government and administering policies such as border control, currency conversion, and enfranchisement will be unpopular among the North Korean people.<sup>207</sup> The United States will be involved in dilemmas that arise from any regional security problems resulting from a change in the Korean status quo. If Washington is involved in this way, it gives South Korea the opportunity to direct their attention towards reunification efforts while the United States takes care of the external problems.<sup>208</sup> If Washington were to take on this role, it would benefit the United States greatly in maintaining a special relationship with unified Koreans despite the fact that the North Korean threat has dissipated.

A last option that the United States must consider to maintain an influential American military presence on the peninsula is to revamp the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) for Korea. If South Korea is to incur all of the costs to rebuild their unified nation, then it is more likely that the American military will be welcome to stay and aid in reunification efforts if Washington would change the Status of Forces agreement. Despite the recent changes made to the Korean SOFA in 2000, it is still unequal in American treatment of the Korean people. In

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<sup>207</sup> "A Blueprint for U.S. Policy Toward a Unified Korea," in CSIS International Security Program [database online]. Washington, D.C. August 2002 [cited 2005]. Available from <http://www.csis.org>

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

a letter written to Secretary Rumsfeld, Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ, of Pensacola-Tallahassee wrote that the Korean SOFA is "provoking new and widespread anti-USA sentiment among the Korean people, who in fact feel that their national pride and sovereignty have been undermined and trampled underfoot."<sup>209</sup> The Korean people are subjected to a SOFA which is more restrictive than those for Japan and Germany. The major point of contention which the United States should change is paying rent for the bases and facilities rather than having the South Korean government pay the price.<sup>210</sup> With this revision, the South Koreans will be more apt to maintain the American forces in their bases since they will no longer need to pay for their rent. If Washington were to modify this stipulation, it will be more likely that an American military presence would remain.

## **2. Effects on the United States**

It is uncertain whether a collapse will occur as the result of an explosion over a few short weeks or erosion that takes five to ten years, if at all. However, if the United States does not get China, Russia, and South Korea onboard with economic sanctions, external nations could support the North Korean regime instead of them reforming and truly living up to the *juche* philosophy. With the continuance of economic sanctions and lack of support for the UN food aid program, the prospects for a gradual reunification would be reduced. The biggest problem that could rise is a growing factionalism within the DPRK government in which South Korea, China, Japan, and Russia could all manipulate the power groups in Pyongyang.<sup>211</sup> More than likely there will not be a rising pro-United States power located within Pyongyang unless major improvements in foreign relations occur in the few years before a collapse takes

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<sup>209</sup> "Bishop Conveys Concern about Korean 'Status of Forces Agreement'," in United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [database online]. Washington, D.C. January 15, 2003 [cited 2005]. Available from <http://www.nccbuscc.org/comm/archives/2003/03-010.shtml>.

<sup>210</sup> "The Status of Forces Agreement," in National Catholic Reporter Online [database online]. Kansas City, MO February 28, 2003 [cited 2005]. Available from [http://www.natcath.com/NCR\\_Online/archives/022803/022803i.htm](http://www.natcath.com/NCR_Online/archives/022803/022803i.htm).

<sup>211</sup> Selig S. Harrison, "The United States and the Future of Korea," in *The Two Koreas and the United States*, Wonmo Dong ed. (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 2000), 201.



place. Once power groups rise out of Pyongyang, it is likely that a pro-China group will make their impact and give China more of an influential edge over the United States. There could be instability that rises out of this factionalism and consequences could include massive numbers of refugees to South Korea, "boat people" into Japan, and civil strife which could result in military encounters.<sup>212</sup> The United States could serve as the coordinator between China, Japan, and other regional players for refugee relocation as well as search and rescue (SAR) missions in the waters surrounding the peninsula.<sup>213</sup>

The spillover of the collapse into military strife would be the last ditch effort of Kim Jong-il to save his regime before he was pushed aside by external powers. American forces might be asked to provide aid in pushing aside the DPRK's military efforts, or it might be on the smaller scale of providing logistics and intelligence support as the South Korean military takes on the major role of fighting in North Korea. The United States, however, will want immediate accountability of all nuclear-related equipment just as they would within a war-time scenario.<sup>214</sup> This might pose a problem if Seoul is unwilling to let the American forces into the North Korean region.

## **E. REUNIFICATION AS A RESULT OF INTER-KOREAN OR MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY**

### **1. Options for the United States**

The two Koreas have been earnestly proposing the terms for a diplomatic and peaceful reunification since their division. The Korean War could actually be considered one of the North's very early steps toward achieving reunification. Despite all out war, Kim Il Sung initially put forth his confederation system proposal in the 1960s and went on to explain it in detail in Kim Il Sung's Ten-Point Program for the Great Unity of the Korean People for Unification in 1993. Kim's confederation proposal retains the two sides' current powers and interests,

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<sup>212</sup> Harrison, "The United States and the Future of Korea," 201.

<sup>213</sup> "A Blueprint for U.S. Policy Toward a Unified Korea," in CSIS International Security Program [database online]. Washington, D.C. August 2002 [cited 2005]. Available from <http://www.csis.org>

<sup>214</sup> Pritchard, "Korean Reunification: Implications for the United States and Northeast Asia,"

yet creates a good environment for future reunification at some point in the future.<sup>215</sup> South Korea's proposal which was put forward by Roh Tae Woo in 1989, calls for a Korean Commonwealth. Under the Commonwealth, using the European community and the British Commonwealth as an example, the Korean people will share common values and traditions while being separated by divided systems. The South Korean plan uses exchange and reconciliation to prepare the northern half of the peninsula for reunification through absorption.<sup>216</sup>

The United States, however, has been committed to a "permanent peace" on the peninsula and in order for this to happen Washington believes the first step is to rid the peninsula of its nuclear program. The United States has taken North Korea's nuclear program very seriously and undertaken the role of neither appeasing nor promoting a warlike stance in order to end the program. During the Beijing Six-Party Talks, they have brought up the idea of economic sanctions to push North Korea toward reformation; however this subject has been extremely controversial. Together, China, Russia, and South Korea are against the use of economic sanctions or even bringing the issue up to the United Nations for fear that it would, in turn, cause North Korea to lash out. The only stipulation was made by Russia which stated that they could see the use of sanctions if there is no result from diplomatic negotiations.

Washington's major positions with regard to Korean policy are: a continuing priority with Iraq means that the administration does not want two wars being fought at the same time; progressive suspension of the Agreed Framework; ambivalence toward negotiations with North Korea; forming an international coalition to end the Northern nuclear program; possible economic sanctions on North Korea if they do not end the nuclear program; and a U.S. military option if North Korea fully activates its nuclear program.<sup>217</sup> While this was the administration policy as of April, 2003, there have been slight

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<sup>215</sup> Liu, "An Obsessed Task: Prospects, Models, and Impact of Korean Reunification," 30-55.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Manyin and Jun, "U.S. Assistance to North Korea."

modifications since the beginning of the Beijing nuclear talks. As of June 24, 2004, Washington offered Pyongyang a new two phase proposition. In the initial phase, North Korea would sign a declaration to totally dismantle their nuclear weapons program under outside supervision.<sup>218</sup> Following this, they would open up their nuclear facilities for inspection. While this is happening, the United States would draft a multilateral security guarantee which would respect their sovereignty and would conduct a survey of the North's energy needs. During this phase, Washington would seek to engage in bilateral talks with Pyongyang in order to work out a timetable for nuclear compliance. During the second phase, North Korea would remove nuclear material and agree to long term monitoring. Following this, the United States would provide the assistance to dismantle the facilities and include the IAEA in this endeavor.<sup>219</sup> Basically the policy would be for the North Koreans to provide proof that they are dismantling prior to the United States giving them any benefits.

Parties of the Beijing talks met again in early August 2005 and the United States held bilateral talks with the North Korean officials as part of the Beijing talks while again stating that they would not attack the DPRK. Nothing was accomplished at these talks. However, North Korea was able to receive an electricity pledge, additional food aid and widened cooperation from South Korea.<sup>220</sup> North-South Korean relations have hit an all time high. This became evident as a crowd of 60,000 South Koreans cheered, "We are one" to a group of visiting North Koreans during the 2005 independence celebration from Japanese rule.<sup>221</sup> Meanwhile the relationship with the United States seems to be splitting as South Korea went against Washington's policy and gave their stamp of

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<sup>218</sup> Paul Kerr, "Parsing the U.S. Proposal," *Arms Control Today* 34, no. 6 (July/August 2004).

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Christian Caryl, B. J. Lee, and Hideko Takayama, "Going Slow ; Pyongyang Knows that its Best Bet is to Play for Time in Nuclear Negotiations." *Newsweek* (Aug 29 2005): 26.

<sup>221</sup> Gordon Fairclough, "Koreas' Warming Ties Complicate Nuclear Equation," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug 16 2005, p. A.15.

approval for a peaceful North Korean nuclear program.<sup>222</sup> While Pyongyang has reached an agreement with the other nations, they will meet again in November 2005 to discuss implementation. Nonetheless, if Washington desires to end the military nuclear threat from North Korea, and overcome the standstill which has been apparent for many years, they should accede to North Korea's plan to maintain their nuclear program for peaceful purposes. There would be strict conditions placed on the program. These conditions would include: a reactor complex that is staffed by South Koreans or international personnel, the reactor would be subject to strict IAEA controls, and North Korea would rejoin the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty upon agreement.<sup>223</sup> If Washington were to acquiesce on this subject, it would place the onus on the North Koreans to abide by the international rules that are set forth while the Americans would appear to support the reunification of the two Korean states.

Another option for Washington to prove that it supports the reunification of the two Koreas is the reduction of military troops. This reduction policy has already been established to incrementally withdraw the 37,000 forces stationed in Korea down to only 12,500 by 2008. Washington should also return the Yongsan Garrison to the ROK and move the smaller remaining American forces of about 1,000 personnel south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.<sup>224</sup> Despite what the 1992 relocation talks stated, the United States should fund the move on their own and not with South Korean money which will be needed elsewhere. There would be no need for the United Nations Combined Forces Command since their role was to deter war and defeat an external armed attack against South Korea if deterrence fails.<sup>225</sup> A possible option would be to combine the United States Forces Korea (USFK) and United States Forces Japan (USFJ) into a US

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<sup>222</sup> Christian Caryl, B. J. Lee, and Hideko Takayama, "Going Slow ; Pyongyang Knows that its Best Bet is to Play for Time in Nuclear Negotiations." *Newsweek* (Aug 29 2005): 26.

<sup>223</sup> Caryl, Lee, and Takayama, "Going Slow ; Pyongyang Knows that its Best Bet is to Play for Time in Nuclear Negotiations," 26.

<sup>224</sup> Niksch, "Korea: U.S.-Korean Relations - Issues for Congress,"

<sup>225</sup> Carl E. Haselden Jr, "The Effects of Korean Unification on the US Military Presence in Northeast Asia," *Parameters* 32, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 120-133.

Northeast Asia Command (NEAC). This would encompass both Japan and Korea and their regional threats.<sup>226</sup> A continued American presence will promote stability upon reunification and reduce the possibility of the ROK leaning towards China.<sup>227</sup> The small American force would be more expeditionary in nature and one that could deal with small-scale contingencies, can deter regional nations from destroying the balance of power, and can operate in a multinational and interagency environment.<sup>228</sup> This would be a way for the South Koreans to feel less “occupied” by the American forces while Washington and Seoul can still retain the strategic benefits of having the American military on the peninsula.

The North Koreans are feeling pressure from both South Korea and China to reform their economy. While they do not want to threaten their political structure, it is evident that they are making strides to “open their doors” to reform. While it falls short of economic reform, their “open door” attitude is based on some of the following policies: adoption of Joint Venture Law regulations; establishment of the Rajin-Sonbong Free Trade Zone; loosening of centralized control over agricultural operations; and training opportunities abroad sponsored by the World Bank.<sup>229</sup> As North Korea begins to stress their economy, the United States could, in exchange for a peace treaty ending the Korean War, give rewards to the North which will begin their working relationship. Rewards could include normalizing formal relations, lifting economic sanctions, unfreezing North Korean assets in American banks (\$15.45 million), and allowing American businessman to develop investment and trade relationships with North Korea.<sup>230</sup> Such an action would allow the United States to play an important role in the economic revival of the North and therefore, maintain this relationship post-unification.

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<sup>226</sup> Haselden, "The Effects of Korean Unification on the US Military Presence in Northeast Asia," 120-133.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Liu, "An Obsessed Task: Prospects, Models, and Impact of Korean Reunification," 30-55.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

## **2. Effects on the United States**

The United States has a vital interest in the security and stability of Northeast Asia. Washington has enormous trade relationships with Japan, South Korea, and more recently, China. The United States conducts over a third of its trade with the East Asian-Pacific region.<sup>231</sup> Just as the economies in the Northeast Asian region are important, so are their militaries. The militaries of China, Russia, and North Korea are three of the more powerful forces in Asia, while Japan has the most modern military force.<sup>232</sup> The presence of American forces in South Korea and Japan has maintained stability in that region since the end of the Korean War. The United States has provided naval and air superiority to each state which, if they had done it on their own, would have provoked an arms race. Conversely, as American forces have protected Japan under their nuclear umbrella, there has been no reason for Japan to build their own nuclear program. Washington would have to reassure Tokyo about the detrimental effects if they were to start their own nuclear program as well as build up their military. All of this is stated with the intention that if American military forces were to be evacuated from the Korean peninsula as part of reunification stipulations, the balance between the nations might be disrupted. Withdrawing American forces could cause a power vacuum which would lead to a conventional and nuclear arms race with devastating effects on the global economy. The American economy's heavy reliance on trade with the Northeast Asian nations would be severely and negatively impacted.

A second devastating effect for the United States if reunification were to occur under a gradual process is a possible strong alliance with China. It has become more apparent that there is rising anti-American tension in South Korea regarding the military basing on the peninsula and Washington's policies toward North Korea. Once Korea has unified, it will no longer need to follow the policies

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<sup>231</sup> Haselden, "The Effects of Korean Unification on the US Military Presence in Northeast Asia," 120-133.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

given by their American “big brother”.<sup>233</sup> Unified Korea might adopt a pro-China policy which would hurt American influence over the region. A stipulation that China and North Korea might request prior to reunification is the complete removal of American forces from the peninsula. This has been discussed earlier. However, it is estimated that for Seoul to match what the American forces have provided for their security, they would have to double their defense spending.<sup>234</sup> While they will no longer have a North Korean threat, they will need to defend against external powers. If Seoul were to decide that they should match the military capabilities that the United States provided, this will be an immense amount of spending that could go toward rebuilding the infrastructure of the unified nation. In this case Seoul might turn towards China to either provide their external security or provide them with the currency to fund their military. Either way, China might be able to restore its traditional relationship over the Korean peninsula while the United States could be pushed out both diplomatically and economically.

## **F. NATIONAL OPTIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES**

### **1. United States Factors to Shape Future Korea**

The United States’ interests in Korea are very similar to how they view the rest of their interests in Asia. With a military and a “special” relationship with Korea providing the foothold to the rest of Asia, the United States is able to prosper from the growing economy and free trade in this region. Because of this great capacity for foreign trade and investments, the United States will face three great challenges in both a unified Korea and the rest of Asia. The first challenge is preventing an arms race. Rising nationalism, rising defense budgets, and decreasing U.S influence in the region will lead Asian rivals to pursue a nuclear program. Another challenge will be the asymmetric threats that will target the Asian economies and the American reliance on free trade in that region. Lastly, with the growth within China and Japan there could be a challenge to American

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<sup>233</sup> Liu, "An Obsessed Task: Prospects, Models, and Impact of Korean Reunification," 30-55.

<sup>234</sup> Jeremy Kirk, "American Troop Withdrawal Plan," *Cybercast News Service* (2004), [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.cnsnews.com>.

privileges in Asia.<sup>235</sup> The U.S must remain strong in this region by maintaining a strong influence over a unified Korea and maintaining an American presence on the peninsula.

Another elemental concern for United States Korean reunification policy is the economic concerns that will follow with an already deteriorated North. Korea has become vital to the U.S. for two important reasons. First off, they are a key trading partner. In 1997, South Korea was the 7<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner with the United States surpassing every NATO ally except Germany and the UK.<sup>236</sup> They have also become a supporter on the peninsula of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the global trading system. Korea would face economic problems with unification that might hinder their partnership in global trade and bring on massive changes in those countries affected. Not only does South Korea serve United States economic interests, but it plays an important role in China, Japan, and the rest of Southeast Asia. South Korea remains the third largest economy in Asia. A reunification of the Korean peninsula would greatly impact the economic interests of the United States and Asia while possibly severely deteriorating the economic system in the South. The major concern will be South Korea's ability to fund the extremely expensive venture of unification. There will be great strains placed on the Korean economy and the United States will suffer as well. American exports will face obstacles on the Korean peninsula: poorer consumers will purchase fewer goods; the Won will be depressed causing American products to be a lot more expensive than Korean products; and rising Korean nationalism along with the desire for a quick fix will carry impending trade barriers.<sup>237</sup> More countries would reallocate foreign investment that might have been spent elsewhere, such as Russia and China, toward the economic upheaval on the peninsula. This in turn will impact the Russian and Chinese

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<sup>235</sup> Frank McNeil, Jeffery Lewis, and John Tai, "Great Power Interests in Korean Reunification," *The Center for Strategic and International Studies* (1998), [journal on-line]; available from [www.csis.org](http://www.csis.org); Internet; accessed September 20, 2004.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> McNeil, Lewis, and Tai, "Great Power Interests in Korean Reunification."



governments that count on that investment to prosper and not stagnate.<sup>238</sup> South Korea's own chaebols will invest their own funds in the former North Korea rather than elsewhere, affecting the United States and other Asian investments.

Another aspect of Korean unification will be the funding required for a new infrastructure and the mass exodus and famine of the North Korean people. First off, a new infrastructure requires rebuilding the North Korean economy all over again. Workers will need to be retrained and facilities will need to be replaced. Facilities which were built with Russian aid are so decayed that they have been shut down rather than fixed. This will place demands upon a major portion of the South Korean investments and funds going towards the rebuilding of the infrastructure. Also, the South, as well as China, will have to contend with an estimated four million refugees that might flee into the newly opened countries.<sup>239</sup> Suffering from famine and chronic diseases, a whole generation of people will place a giant strain on a united Korean economy.

The United States must also realize how important it is to maintain a security interest on the peninsula while also dismantling the nuclear program in the North. Korea serves as an essential piece of the Asian puzzle. First off, the United States needs to ensure that the Asian region remains neighborly and there is no conflict. Any instability would threaten Washington's influence in the region as well as their economic interests. Secondly, Korea is a test to prove the American resolve for the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. The United States will stand firm in obtaining their seat in any Asian regional negotiations. Lastly, it is in the interest of the United States to maintain a non-nuclear Korea for their security as well as the rest of Asia. A nuclear Korea might cause Japan and other Asian countries to feel threatened and build their own nuclear programs as well.<sup>240</sup> Nuclear disarmament remains a scorching issue within the United States and the major powers involved in the Six Party Talks. North Korea has admitted to

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<sup>238</sup> McNeil, Lewis, and Tai, "Great Power Interests in Korean Reunification."

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

Washington officials that they have a nuclear program, however there still is no proof of the actual program in the North. Both China and Japan are interested in the Beijing talks to shut down a northern nuclear program. China desires to remain the regional hegemon and a unified nuclear Korea would threaten their power. Japan would also feel threatened with a nuclear unified Korea, placing them in the position to build their own nuclear program. The United States, under direct verbal attack from the North Korean government, fears the North Koreans using a nuclear weapon or a rogue terrorist getting their hands on it. Nuclear discussions have definitely been in the forefront of the dilemmas in reunification and need to be continued and resolved prior to the United States approval of any further action. A unified Korea would intimidate the security that already exists in Asia. The United States will need to balance out security objectives with a unified Korea that will benefit the peninsula as well as the other Asian nations. The Korean peninsula has served as a buffer state for most of Asia. Serving as a direct route to China, Japan, and Russia, they have tempered the peace and maintained a balance in Asia. Upon unification, there will be a great sense of uncertainty with the new nation state. China will be most interested in expanding their influence into the peninsula at the expense of the other great powers. If the United States is involved militarily or politically in the region, this Chinese influence will pose a security problem.

A last concern that the United States will need to consider is a possible break of the "special security relationship" with the South. The relationship with South Korea exists because of two commitments, forward deployed troops and the extension of the American nuclear umbrella.<sup>241</sup> A loss of this special relationship would lose American resolve in the Pacific, a steadying role for Korea, and a non-nuclear peninsula. The South Korean public has recently advocated decreasing the American presence and influence on the peninsula. Some new young bureaucrats who will run the country in the future tend to forget that it was because of American help in the Korean War that they are not in similar conditions of North Korean squalor and famine. In conclusion, losing the

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<sup>241</sup> McNeil, Lewis, and Tai, "Great Power Interests in Korean Reunification."

“special” relationship will severely detriment the United States’ influence over Korea and the rest of Asia.

## **2. Best Case Scenario**

American leaders in Washington have been viewed by the two Korean states as “dragging their feet” in order to continue American influence over the South Koreans while the two states are divided. It is not preposterous to believe that “off the record” the United States would not be interested in Korean reunification since it might prompt total withdrawal of American troops, the end of the special security role and influence in Northeast Asia, and a decrease of trade with one of the United States’ major economic partners.<sup>242</sup> Despite this belief, the United States must outwardly support their South Korean “little brother” in their reunification efforts. If they are to support reunification, Washington would like to have the best case scenario for reunification to support the United States’ goals and interests on the peninsula. Washington’s interests for the Korean peninsula following unification are for a “stable, non-nuclear, liberal-democratic, free market peninsula allied with the United States”.<sup>243</sup> The stability of the peninsula would be controlled with strong political and civil control operating under a sturdy government and rule of law and preventing illicit activities such as drug trafficking and terrorism. There would be open channels of communication to work out the problems associated with transition in the north. Third-party involvement under a multinational flag such as the United Nations would be welcomed for appropriate action. The refugees would be manageable and limited while adequate aid is provided for the citizens that are malnourished and need medical treatment. The peninsula would reunify under the premise that they will be a “non-nuclear” power, which would also encompass all forms of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>244</sup> This would be important to prevent an escalating arms race in the region. Lastly, the “democratic, market-oriented” state would require that the peninsula be developed with the same principles

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<sup>242</sup> McNeil, Lewis, and Tai, "Great Power Interests in Korean Reunification."

<sup>243</sup> "A Blueprint for U.S. Policy Toward a Unified Korea," in CSIS International Security Program [database online]. Washington, D.C. August 2002 [cited 2005], [available online]

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

which the ROK incorporates, such as the following: rule of law, civil liberties, elections among free parties, private property, and free market capitalism.<sup>245</sup> If this best case scenario were to occur, the United States would prosper from retaining their influence on the peninsula and keeping their interests at hand.

### **3. Worst Case Scenario**

A scenario which would have the worst possible outcomes for the United States would have one major factor present throughout, a pro-China view. While the United States currently has a working relationship with China, it is possible that China's goal to modernize and develop their military will lead to the "unbalancing" of powers in the region. If Korea were to align with China's developing nation, it would push American influence off of the peninsula and possibly out of the Northeast Asian region. Another factor of this scenario would be reunification without the prior termination of the North Korean nuclear program. Once reunification has taken place a unified Korea would pose a security threat to Japan and China. This would be grounds for an emerging Japanese military and nuclear program to develop in the region. Under this scenario, an arms race could ensue as a result of separation from the United States and a unified Korea's need to show that they are a developed nation in the international community. If this were to happen, the United States will not have the influence or special alliance to control the escalation.

### **4. Policy Approaches**

During the Clinton administration, the President had directed his special advisor, William Perry, to review the policy of the United States towards North Korea. After visiting North Korea and meeting with their leaders, Perry wrote his report. His review is important since it provides a great background to a policy which will benefit South Korea and North Korea, which in turn will enable the United States to maintain their influence upon reunification. Dr. Perry stated that if North Korea rejects this policy, then the United States will need to take appropriate measures to protect American security as well as that of their

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<sup>245</sup> "A Blueprint for U.S. Policy Toward a Unified Korea," in CSIS International Security Program [database online]. Washington, D.C. August 2002 [cited 2005], [available online]

allies.<sup>246</sup> By acquiring nuclear weapons, Perry stated that North Korea would threaten the security of South Korea, the United States, and neighboring Asian nations. Feeling threatened by a nuclear state, there would be a possible spark in an arms race in eastern Asia. Perry concluded that it was urgent to end this nuclear program in North Korea and keep it contained so that nothing could stem out of control. Based on this strategy, he formulated three facts which the United States needs to follow. First off, United States policy must acknowledge that there is no regime change in North Korea in sight.<sup>247</sup> Policy must be based on the Pyongyang regime that is in power and not making policy based on the possibility of a new leader. The second fact that must be considered before making American policy is that a war would be extremely destructive. While only minimum forces are sustained in South Korea, more American as well as Allied forces would be sent to the peninsula to fight a war against the North. Both North and South Korean infrastructure would suffer as a result of a war and the international economy would suffer in rebuilding the Korean infrastructure.<sup>248</sup> Lastly, while there are many critics of the 1994 Agreed Framework, it has done its job in freezing the plutonium production in Yongbyon.<sup>249</sup> This point is an item of contention since North Korea has recently admitted to restarting their nuclear facilities. However, if the United States were to make a similar policy as the 1994 Agreement in which aid and energy packages were given in exchange for the termination of the nuclear programs, it would have the best possible chance to dismantle the facilities.

Using these key findings, the Perry report recommended a Two-Path Strategy for dealing with North Korea with five key policy recommendations. First, the U.S. should adopt a “comprehensive and integrated approach to the DPRK’s nuclear weapons.” Second, it should “create a strengthened mechanism

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<sup>246</sup> Dr. William J. Perry, *Review of United States Policy Toward North Korea: Findings and Recommendations* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, October 12, 1999).

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Perry, *Review of United States Policy Toward North Korea: Findings and Recommendations*.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

within the U.S. government for carrying out North Korea policy". Third, continue the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) that was established to manage policy toward the DPRK. Fourth, "take steps to create a sustainable, bipartisan, long-term outlook toward the problem of North Korea".<sup>250</sup> The last key recommendation was to approve a plan dealing with a DPRK provocation. While the U.S. supports the plan to work out a diplomatic solution to freezing the nuclear weapons program in North Korea, it is important to inform Pyongyang that by breaking the provisions of a future agreement, they would pay a heavy penalty.

Other than taking care of North Korea's nuclear program, the United States can help achieve a limited form of peaceful "regime change" in North Korea by enhancing regional stability and still maintaining their influence over the peninsula.<sup>251</sup> In order to do this Washington should begin the normalization of relations with North Korea and removing them from the "Axis of Evil" and terrorist nation lists. Washington should stress that their military presence, even though very minimal, should be maintained on the peninsula to protect it from regional factionalism and a regional arms race. The United States should establish a senior "special advisor" to the president or secretary of state whose job is to create and implement policy towards Korean reunification.<sup>252</sup> This would prove to the Koreans that Washington believes that unification is important to American policy. Lastly, they should stress a multinational forum in which China, Russia, Japan, and the United States all have a say in the reunification efforts. This

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<sup>250</sup> Perry, *Review of United States Policy Toward North Korea: Findings and Recommendations*.

<sup>251</sup> Edward A. Olsen, "U.S.-North Korean Relations: Foreign Policy Dilemmas," *North Korean Review* (Fall 2005): 72.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

policy might stress the multinational forum rather than a unilateral movement towards China. If American policy were to reform so that it would aid the South Koreans in their reunification efforts, they would have the possibility of maintaining leverage over a unified Korea. Despite Washington's approach of dragging out the process of reunification, a unified Korea could have great economic and strategic benefits to the international community.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

### **A. KOREA WILL REUNIFY**

#### **1. Summary of the Three Scenarios**

The three scenarios which have been discussed in great detail in chapter one fall into one of two categories: a “hard landing” or a “soft landing”. The first category, “hard landing”, is a result of a rapid process in which Korean reunification by a war or a collapse would occur. In other words, the scenario would take place so quickly that it would not permit South Korea and the other involved international players to fully prepare for the best possible results applicable to the Korean peninsula. By stating “best possible results”, one assumes that Korean reunification could take place with the least amount of problems, whether they are economic, political, domestic, or external issues. The second category, a “gradual process” or a “soft-landing”, would occur as a result of the multilateral and inter-Korean diplomatic approach. This scenario is based on the idea that through a gradual process the two Korean states, along with the international powers, will be able to work out a suitable reunification policy which all players involved would support.

While a gradual approach to reunification has the possibility of taking anywhere from five to twenty years to accomplish, the general goal for North and South Korea is that a diplomatic approach will reach the eventual consolidation of one nation of the Korean brethren. China, Japan, and the United States are vocal in their show of support for Korean reunification. However, each one of them will lose some sort of influence over the peninsula once it has reunified. If they could, they would support the status quo and maintain the leverage that they already have obtained. This is impossible to do without risking current relations with the two Korean states and future relations with unified Korea. Therefore, by supporting a gradual reunification process, the three nations will be able to take their time to plan for the future possibilities along the Korean peninsula, as well as hope that the two systems might never be able to come to an agreement. The only exception to this is Russia. Russia’s loss is minimal compared to the other



powers. They have the possibility of gaining a great deal with unification of the Korean state. While Russia supports a long term diplomatic approach, Moscow is willing to work diligently towards the goal of reunification. In the end, each power realizes that Korea will be a future unified factor in the global economy. Therefore, they will continue in their support of Korean unification so that afterwards they will have leverage throughout the peninsula.

## **2. Which Scenario Will Guide Reunification**

Prior to unification, the two Korean states have the pressing problem of solving the nuclear crisis inside Pyongyang. Also, all powers involved in the Beijing-based Six-Power Talks intend to establish a peaceful Korean peninsula before negotiations for reunification can be seriously discussed. Since the latest round of talks in August 2005, there have been no agreements to dismantle or concede to a civilian controlled nuclear program. The North Koreans are known to ask for more concessions in order to “ratchet up the stakes” while never fully intending for the other side to comply. North Korea will do this so the United States can look like they are not supporting peaceful means to dismantlement, while the North Koreans can safely retain the ultimate guarantee to their security. They have done this many times in the past. In 1991, the North Koreans claimed that their nuclear program was based on the American nuclear weapons on the peninsula. When the United States removed their nuclear weapons as part of a reconfiguration of forces, the North Koreans shifted their demands and asked for access to both South Korean and American military facilities in order to confirm the withdrawal.<sup>253</sup> More recently North Korea has asked for the United States’ recognition of their state through bilateral negotiations. In July and August 2005, the two states met, in the context of the Six-Party Talks, and discussed the problems only for North Korea to “ratchet up the stakes” again and ask for civilian-energy use of their nuclear reactors. The contention here is that Kim Jong-il will never willingly dismantle the North Korean nuclear program while he is in power. The main reason for this is that his regime feels threatened by the

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<sup>253</sup> Michael Horowitz, "Who's Behind that Curtain? Unveiling Potential Leverage Over Pyongyang," *The Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2004-05): 26.

United States. Seoul desires to maintain their economy and political system upon reunification. It is not in the interest of South Koreans to place the peninsula under the control of a communist dictator. Conversely, it is assumed that Kim Jong-il will not negotiate away his position of control through multilateral and inter-Korean diplomacy. Also, he would not shorten his reign by attacking South Korea or Japan. Therefore, if no agreement can be reached while the two sides are at an impasse, reunification will take an extensive amount of time while the peninsula remains at the status quo.

So what if Kim Jong-il's security threat perceptions were taken away? If the United States were to sign a declaration of nonaggression, Kim Jong-il would probably still feel threatened and not want to dismantle the nuclear program. The people of North Korea, although under a closed society, will eventually desire to get out from under the strict controls of the dictatorship. As of late 2004, it was estimated that at least 30 percent of the North Korean population within working age was either unemployed or under-employed. Some of the people who did receive salaries are receiving a paycheck below the subsistence levels. Currency inflation within the state has sent food prices sky-high. Families spend up to 80 percent of an income just for food.<sup>254</sup> The CIA estimates that out of a population of about 22.7 million people, 6.5 million of them are at risk of starvation. The North Korean people are suffering from the policies of Pyongyang. By retaining a nuclear program, Kim Jong-il can use it to retain leverage over his decaying society. Kim can use his nuclear threat to blackmail the international arena to provide food aid, medical supplies, and the reconstruction of their infrastructure. There is a growing social instability among the people that, without this leverage, could lead to the loss of political control. This instability is caused by the masses of people at the subsistence levels, bureaucrats traveling abroad and becoming aware of their state's shortcomings, the middle class which is obtaining more opportunities to study outside of North Korea, and the increase of refugees yearning for better conditions. A call for

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<sup>254</sup> Michael Horowitz, "Who's Behind that Curtain? Unveiling Potential Leverage Over Pyongyang," 30.

reforms in the economy will be sought which is inconsistent with the ideological, political, and power structure of Kim Jong-il.<sup>255</sup> The dependence on their leader is not consistent with economic reforms which will make the people less dependent on the state. A former Kim Il-sung University Professor, Cho Myung-chul has been quoted saying that there is a similar generational clash in North Korea as there is in the South. The older generation still places emphasis on security, while the younger generation who have studied abroad in China, Russia, and even further, see their state's need for economic reforms.<sup>256</sup> This gap will be present in the future as the generation takes over the positions of leadership and desires reform in their state.

Consequently through a gradual process, the contention here is that the North Korean people will desire to have more economic reforms in their society. Some factions within the government would support such a call for reforms if they are able to oust Kim Jong-il and retain the position of leadership for themselves. Getting Kim Jong-il out of power will be an important part of this process since the factions would be in personal jeopardy if they called for reform and Kim was still in control of the state. Therefore, the North Korean state would “crumble from above” as factions within Pyongyang try to peacefully oust Kim Jong-il, with the support of the people. The massive portion of the population that is susceptible to famine while Kim Jong-il continues to feed and control his military will support the overthrow of the current regime. This scenario might not occur until Kim Jong-il is about to relinquish power to one of his family members. Therefore, the conclusion here is the collapse of the political system within the North Korean government will initiate the reunification of the Korean peninsula primarily because Kim Jong-il will not reunify under more peaceful terms since it would mean relinquishing his position and control over the society.

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<sup>255</sup> *North Korea: Can the Iron Fist Accept the Invisible Hand?*(Brussels: Crisis Group, 2005), 13.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*,13.

## **B. MAJOR POWER INFLUENCE**

China while suffering from the mass exodus of Korean refugees will benefit the greatest from this collapse scenario because they will retain the most leverage compared to all of the other major powers. Their historical ties to both of the Korean states lend a helping hand compared to the United States which is viewed as an outside Westerner. Also, South Korea and the United States are not as close as they once were. An example of this is the ROK's willingness to go against Washington's policy toward the Six-Party Talks and support North Korea's desire to maintain their nuclear reactors for energy usage. While Pyongyang and Beijing are not as close as they once used to be during the Cold War, there is no closer ally to the North Korean people than the Chinese. Therefore, just based on relationships, China would acquire greater leverage compared to Japan, Russia, and the United States, since South Korea will desire to distance themselves from their "big brother" in Washington.

A second issue that China will use to gain leverage over the unified Korea is through the economy. During the years since China's economic reformation, they have been trying to push Pyongyang toward transformation as well. Even though North Korea has only activated minor reforms, it has been the Chinese model of the economy that was used. Kim Jong-il authorized the creation of special economic zones that are advocated by the Chinese model. China alone has had the largest amount of economic influence over North Korea, while trade with South Korea has increased over the years.<sup>257</sup> Since Chinese businessmen are allowed within the North Korean borders, they already have relationships with their Korean partners as they directly invest in the state. Lastly, since reform has not taken hold, North Korea is dependent on the aid received from China and South Korea. Following a collapse, it is plausible that the new leadership would seek Chinese help to rebuild their society while reunifying with the South Korean state.

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<sup>257</sup> Horowitz, "Who's Behind that Curtain? Unveiling Potential Leverage Over Pyongyang," 31.

Finally, the Chinese military has a strong traditional relationship with the North Korean military. This will serve as another aspect in which China will gain the maximum influence over a reunified Korea. Both militaries have given support to one another, the North Koreans aided during the Chinese Civil War while the Chinese supported North Korea during the Korean War. Beijing has had contact with the North Korean elites through the military and multiple military technology transfers.<sup>258</sup> Since the fall of 2003, China has been training for a potential flood of refugees into their borders as a result of a collapse or war. Instead of meeting the refugees in China, Chinese forces could use their alliances within North Korea to push inside the Korean borders and station their refugee camps inside the border. This action could then set up the Chinese forces to follow up into the major cities and help control the peace. If China's military supports the reunification efforts by maintaining a peaceful situation on the peninsula, the United States would not be involved in this crucial step towards reunification.

In conclusion, based on the circumstances assessed here Kim Jong-il will not be able to negotiate away his nuclear program, his only security against an American-led preemptive strike to oust his regime. However, he is not prepared to strike out against the South Korean state since the American military superiority would take out his regime. Also, there is no way that Kim Jong-il will agree to the demands of reunification set forth by Seoul, a policy that would take control away from his position as well. Therefore, the contention here is that he will use his nuclear program as a way to gain concessions from the international community while never reforming the closed society. This will not be enough to lessen the extreme hardships that the North Korean people are facing. At some point in the future, the North Korean people will have had enough and will support a faction within the government to take control away from Kim Jong-il or

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<sup>258</sup> Horowitz, "Who's Behind that Curtain? Unveiling Potential Leverage Over Pyongyang," 27.

his lineal successor. At this point, the North Korean state will begin to crumble and Seoul will need to rapidly begin the reunification process to support their North Korean brethren. Once this happens China will be the likely choice to provide the maximum economic, military, and cultural benefits to the affected peninsula. Based on the support provided and the relations during the reunification process, once everything is all settled, China will gain maximum leverage over unified Korea.

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